THE MUTABILITY OF HUMAN LIFE; OR, MEMOIRS OF *ADELAIDE*, Marchioneſs of MELVILLE.

By a LADY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON,
Printed for J. BEW, in Pater-Noſter-Row.
1777.

*67-766 VOL. 1

THE MUTABILITY OF HUMAN LIFE, &c.

Miſs HOWARD *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Laurel Grove.

WHEN will the conducting angel guide me to the realms of peace, where ſorrow no more tortures the victim of oppreſſion! Oh, when will that happy period arrive, when Time, with me, ſhall be no more! My enemy—but, alas! I

will not retort his cruel wiſhes—My innocence gleams a ſatisfaction which, with all his power, his conſcious guilt muſt certainly deny.——Yet do not theſe ſentiments allude to a deſire of revenge, which a Chriſtian ſhould not harbour? Ah! Harriot, at preſent I am almoſt qualified to be a ſtraw-crowned majeſty.

From the above introduction you may imagine I am left to the diſpoſal of the fickle goddeſs Fortune for my future ſubſiſtence. What a weary pilgrimage have I in view.—Alas! I cannot proceed.

❁ ❁

A fortnight has elapſed ſince my fate has been determined: I can ſcarce yet be calm.—My friends are all fled—they condemn me.—I wonder not, appearances are ſeverely againſt me: perhaps in affluence

fluence I have myſelf joined in condemning the innocent; for how liable are we mortals to error; it is our tremendous Judge only who can fathom hearts, and diſcover virtue or vice in them—to each other we are unjuſt.

" Birds feed on birds, beaſts on each other prey,
" But ſavage man alone does man betray;
" Preſs'd by neceſſity, they kill for food,
" Man undoes man to do himſelf no good."

I dropped my pen, that I might, if poſſible, aſſume more fortitude to continue my epiſtle—what I had written ſeemed the effuſions of a diſtempered brain. Ah! philoſophy, religion, be my guides, ſaid I; teach me to bear loſs of reputation, and loſs of fortune, with more moderation: yet, reputation, when thou art fled, never, ah! never,

canſt thou be regained!—I went down to the parlour, and was there informed my noble relations were gone out in the carriage; upon which, taking up a lute, I retired to the garden: words ſuitable to my diſtreſſed mind accompanied the inſtrument, a ſhower of tears fell, which in ſome meaſure relieved the extreme oppreſſion I felt at heart, and I am returned with more compoſure to re-aſſume my pen.

The Earl and Counteſs of N—— inſiſt on my leaving their houſe to-morrow—"they can no longer with decorum harbour me." Was I really the infamous creature they believe me to be, would not their unkind behaviour and want of benevolence precipitate me ſtill deeper into perdition? Thoughtleſs people! How many unhappy proſtitutes that

that traverſe the ſtreets hourly imprecate the wrath of Heaven on their obdurate friends, for unkindly and inhumanly conſigning them to ſuch miſery for perhaps one falſe ſtep! Some of them, undoubtedly, whilſt heart-felt agonies and the deepeſt ſorrow and repentance were urging them on to the path of virtue, by the cruelty and obduracy of thoſe friends in repulſing their efforts of return to rectitude, occaſioned by keen ſenſations, have been driven back to irremediable vice. Thoſe ill-named friends have much to anſwer for. Alas! poor wretches, conſcience muſt condemn them, and point out that they might have ſaved a fellow-creature from ruin, whom they conſigned to infamy and everlaſting perdition. What horror in ſuch whiſpers from the heart! But let us bid adieu to theſe melancholy ideas, and ſurrender

the objects to the mercy of that Being who has promiſed to liſten to the petitions of repentant ſinners.

Thou art now, my Harriot, the only friend I have remaining. How canſt thou dare befriend one the whole world condemns? I ſhall haſten to thee ſoon: in the mean time, try all in thy power to promote the ſcheme I mentioned in my laſt—find out ſome old lady who will receive me as a companion; the more immerſed ſhe is in ſolitude the better; company is not ſuitable for my preſent or future ſituation. Never muſt I again appear in the world; its cenſure has driven me from it. I prefer dependance to buſineſs; pride urges it; have I not been a Marchioneſs? Servitude, alſo, would diſgrace my relations too much; tho' what the lofty term a toad-

eater

eater is not preferable in my opinion, and barely a genteel ſtate of ſervitude. However, my deareſt Harriot, my plan is fixed; ſuch is my intention, if poſſible to procure the ſituation I mentioned.

Lady N—— has juſt been to take her final leave of me. There being a ſtranger below, I ſupped in my chamber.

"Here, ſaid her Ladyſhip, preſenting me with a hundred-pound note, is the laſt favour or notice you muſt ever expect from me.—We deſire never to ſee your face again, except we hear you amend your conduct."——"Adieu!" added ſhe ſcornfully, and bounced out of the room.

Such a farewel was what I expected. I curteſyed ſubmiſſion to her Ladyſhip, and wiped away the tears her reproaches had cauſed.—Yet why do I blame her or the world. My perfidious Melville is the viper that has deſtroyed my good name. —Alas!—but I muſt not arraign Providence.—Adieu to complaints.—From henceforward receive me as Miſs Silena Howard; my ſecond feigned appellation. The Marquiſs has ſtained my real one, therefore for the future I muſt wrap myſelf in a cloud of oblivion.—In London I will not be *viſible*. Ireland! thou, at preſent to me an unknown ſpot, may'ſt thou be more propitious!—May I at leaſt find a peaceful ſolitary retreat in thee! But, oh! my Harriot, let me not converſe on the author of my ruin—on him who ſhould have been my protector. Let all thoughts of him be baniſhed

niſhed from my memory; thinking will only add to my pain; it will never aſſiſt me to conquer it. Unconnected as I am with any one but you, I muſt conſider the characters I meet with in life as puppets in a ſhow, and laugh at their abſurdity; tho' ſatire is ſo dangerous and unlaudable an adherent, that I almoſt fear adopting it, leſt it ſhould prove my maſter, and never quit me.

Adieu! my uncommon friend. Happineſs, eternal happineſs, attend you!

SILENA HOWARD.

Lord VILLARS *to Lord* DUNCAN *at* Paris.

I AM doom'd, Duncan, to be the victim of woman. My wretchedneſs increaſes. You know I left London to

avoid my faithleſs wife, whoſe criminality I ſuppoſe will ſoon be made public. My uncle has undertaken to free me by the laws of the land.—Proofs will ſoon appear againſt her.—She is too abandoned for me to attempt ſhielding a reputation ſhe has long convinced the world ſhe has loſt. I never loved her, but I pitied her inattention to herſelf.

Baniſhed London by ſhame for her guilty conduct, I ranged the country, and in this ſerious mood arrived at the Earl of N——'s, in Yorkſhire, almoſt forſwearing all the ſex.

Lord and Lady N——, the ſervants informed me, were gone to take an airing; therefore I ſtrolled into the garden. Hearing at a diſtance the ſound of a lute tuning, I purſued it till I arrived behind

an

an arbour which in a manner hung over a pond of gold fiſh. On the riſing bank ſat a young lady, uncommonly beautiful, attired in deep mourning. A melancholy was diffuſed over her lovely countenance. After playing the ſymphony, ſhe ſung the following words:

O Death! why—why doſt thou fly the wretched?
Approach, and terminate my woes. Approach, O Death!
Then ſhall my innocence appear; I ſhall triumph—ſhall triumph o'er my foes:
Slander ſhall be vanquiſhed—the guilty ſhall tremble.
O Death! why, &c.

While ſhe ſung, the pearly drops ran down her cheek.—She finiſhed.—Her melting notes ſtill dwelt upon my ear.—I longed to approach her, but I feared to offend.—I dared not interrupt her

diſtreſs. Putting down the inſtrument, ſhe burſt into an agony of grief, and extended herſelf on the graſs for about the ſpace of ten minutes;—then, raiſing herſelf, "True, ſaid ſhe, thou noble maximiſt; paſt and future evils are eaſily ſubdued, but the preſent claims too large a portion of philoſophy for feeble woman to ſuſtain. Why, ah! why cannot I prove ſuch heroiſm?

My ſoul, to loftier regions take thy flight,
Entomb thy ſorrows in the veil of Night;
Oh! let my mind above the vulgar ſoar,
Calmly reſign'd, ſtill Providence adore."

She ſat for ſome moments with her hands folded and her charming eyes lifted towards Heaven.—At laſt, ſeemingly more compoſed, ſhe aroſe, and, taking up the lute, returned, with a majeſtic air, to the houſe. There, Dun-

can,

can, I loſt her, I fear, for ever. Her beauty—her affecting manner—is paſt deſcription. In ſhort, Charles, I find myſelf very unhappy on her account.—I wiſh to know who ſhe is—I wiſh to relieve her diſtreſs—but no trace of her can I find.

That night I promiſed myſelf the happineſs of her company,—but no fair one appeared. After ſupper Lady N—— withdrew, and in leſs than ten minutes returned again.

"How did ſhe receive it?" ſaid his Lordſhip.

"Properly," returned ſhe, with a toſs of her head, which ſignified "Say no more."

Not

Not able to contain myſelf any longer within bounds, I hope, Madam, ſaid I, your Ladyſhip has not made a ſtranger of me, or that I have been the means of preventing any friend of yours from appearing at ſupper. I think, added I careleſsly, a lady was walking in the garden when I firſt arrived; ſurely ſhe did not abſent herſelf on my account.

Lady N—— coloured. By no means, my Lord, returned ſhe; that perſon is not well, and chuſes to remain in her chamber.

I bowed, and ſoon after retired to mine.

Two days paſſed, Duncan, in which I hoped for a glimpſe of the fair unknown.—My hopes were vain. Out of patience,

patience, I ventured to attack Lord N——, and enquire after her health.

She is better, and at London by this time, I ſuppoſe, returned he.

The ſternneſs with which he anſwered me obliged me to drop the ſubject. I then queſtioned Dumont, my valet, about the family, and with a negligent air ſaid I wondered who the lady was I had ſeen in the garden.

" Why I can gain very little account about her, pleaſe your Lordſhip, ſaid he, tho' my curioſity was awakened by your Lordſhip's deſcription of her; and, finding ſhe did not appear at ſupper, I aſked Mr. Trimbuſh. He ſaid as how ſhe had been here theſe two months, and that his Lord and Lady called her Miſs Avelini,

lini. The ſervants ſuppoſe ſhe is an Italian, for they always talked in that language, he ſaid;—that ſhe was very melancholy, and never appeared before company; and the day after our arrival a poſt-chaiſe and four came early in the morning, and ſhe went away in it. Lady N——'s maid cried after her, and ſaid ſhe was a ſweet young lady, tho' ſhe did not know who ſhe was,—but that for certain ſhe was a foreigner, for Miſs herſelf told her ſo:—and that's all I know about her, pleaſe your Lordſhip," concluded he.

Humph! ſaid I ſmiling, 'tis rather a myſterious hiſtory. Don't the ſervants know where ſhe is gone?

No, my Lord, they only imagine to ſome friends at London, as ſhe hinted ſo

to

to Mrs. Kitty; and by this time ſhe muſt be got there, as ſhe went poſt.

Diſmiſſing Dumont, I re-aſſumed my reflections. They were diſpleaſing ones. I was acting contrary to the rules of honour, at leaſt my own rules; for the faſhionable ones, you know, Charles, I diſcard. My wife's infidelities have long been the diſcourſe of the polite world. I knew ſhe deſerved its cenſure, but proofs of her guilt I could not obtain. Since my departure ſhe has been leſs on her guard; Capt. F— frequently paſſes the night with her; therefore in all probability we ſhall ſoon be diſunited. Tho' I never loved her, nay, never even eſteemed her, yet I cannot help allowing her ſome pity. Perhaps I feel more for her than ſhe does for herſelf. Yet ſurely, when thoroughly awakened from the

abyſs

abyſs of pleaſure by the torch of divine truth, who will diſplay her crime unveiled to an unpitying world, happy when they find a ſort of juſtice in cenſure, ſhe will repent; for her own ſake I hope ſhe will ſpend the remainder of her days in penitence and retirement. Situated, therefore, as I am—a *huſband*—till that tye is diſſolved I cannot with honour purſue, or make any further enquiry after, the charming Avelini. I find Love a tyrant; it combats with me againſt reaſon. Let me tell thee, Duncan, I never imagined it could diſorder the mind of man as it does mine at preſent.—Yet genuine love is a refined paſſion, it dwells not in lewd minds—it ſeeks the welfare of the object, and leads to virtue, honour, every noble ſentiment.—But I rave.—Soon I hope to have it in my power, with decorum, to

enquire

enquire of Lord N—— after my charming enſlaver. Two divorces have taken place lately, mine will be the third.—Proofs of the gallantry of this age—melancholy proofs! Had I loved Lady Villars as I adore Avelini, what a wretched being muſt I have languiſhed out the remainder of my days! But innocence is diſplayed in the countenance of my lovely maid. I am certain, notwithſtanding Dumont's account, by the words I heard her utter, ſhe is an Engliſhwoman, or has been here ever ſince her infancy. I am confident, alſo, ſhe has every virtue that can ennoble the ſoul.—Yet ſhe is unhappy—ſeems perſecuted by fortune. To prove the lucky wight to ſet her free from misfortune's power ſhall be my wiſh and ambition. Soon again thou ſhalt hear from

VILLARS.

Miſs

Miſs HOWARD *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

London.

I FEAR my long ſilence has given you various opinions concerning me, my dear Harriot; but I am certain none of them were to my diſadvantage. Your ideas of friendſhip are too refined to diſtruſt the continuance of hers, whoſe eſteem, was it formed by the common tyes of thoſe we frequently meet with, muſt ſeemingly continue to ſtrengthen her own intereſt, loſt as ſhe is to all the world beſide. But our hearts were cemented in our early years, never but by the king of terrors to be diſunited. How often lately have I invoked his aid! Perhaps I am reſerved for greater troubles.—Yet why ſhould I repine? Alas! I fear 'tis pride that bends my ſtubborn

ſtubborn ſoul, and overpowers me. Baſe paſſion, avaunt! Are not the poor and rich equally the ſons and daughters of the Almighty? While we are in poſſeſſion of virtue, let us ſmile with contempt on the riches of this ſublunary world.—Slaves, perhaps, in one hour, the next enjoying immortal bliſs. We may compare ourſelves to travellers; cannot we learn, then, to bear a few inſults on the road, when our journey is to be ſo ſoon terminated? Alas! the theory is eaſy, but the practice difficult indeed.

A few hours after finiſhing my laſt letter I left Laurel Grove, and, arriving ſafe at York, determined to be conveyed to London in the Fly, as the moſt eligible manner, having now no ſervants to attend me. In this vehicle I found a lady, about five and thirty years of age, of a very

very agreeable aſpect and intereſting addreſs. She endeavoured to diſſipate the gloom which appeared too viſible on my countenance; told diverting tales; and for a few moments made me almoſt forget my afflictions. Thus familiarized, ſhe aſked me to what part of London I was going; I anſwered, to my lodgings at Mrs. More's, in B— Street. Ah! ſaid ſhe, with a pleaſing ſurprize in her looks, Mrs. More is a very worthy woman; I live in the ſame ſtreet, and ſhall be very happy, Miſs, if you will often favour me with the pleaſure of your company.

Returning her thanks, I anſwered I ſhould be proud of her friendſhip, and would ſometimes trouble her while at Mrs. More's, but my ſtay there would not be of long duration I believed.

We

We inſenſibly became more agreeable to each other, my dear Harriot, and at the end of our journey parted with reluctance. She inſiſted upon my dining with her the next day. I eagerly enquired her character of Mrs. More, who informed me ſhe was a lady of good family, and much careſſed by her friends, who were all people in high life; that her fortune was but moderate, but, being generally beloved by her friends and relations, ſhe paſſed very little of her time at home. This news was far from diſpleaſing to me, as I had flattered myſelf ſhe would ſerve me if in her power.

I had given her as yet no account of myſelf, tho' I perceived her curioſity was awakened; but her politeneſs withheld her from interrogatories. It was neceſſary I ſhould ſay ſomething. Gene-

rous

rous ſentiments aroſe on the ſurface, and almoſt determined me to make a ſtranger acquainted with my real misfortunes; but powerful reflection ſoon returned, and made me reject that determination. Would a ſtranger believe me innocent when ſuch ſtrong proofs appeared of my guilt? Alas! I could ſcarce diſapprove her want of faith, which might be the conſequence. My hiſtory ſo uncommon a one, would ſhe not imagine me an adventurer? Fiction, diſſimulation, I concluded, muſt be my reſource.

I went according to promiſe. She received me with open arms. We dined. She offered me her friendſhip in the moſt obliging manner. I informed her that a near relation, with whom I had lived, having died not long ſince without providing

providing for me, I was left in a manner deſtitute, and obliged to ſeek ſome means of livelihood; that, as I had been always in genteel life, I determined, if poſſible, to find ſome lady to whom I might be companion, on which plan I was going to Ireland. I further informed her where a dear and valuable friend was endeavouring to procure a place ſuitable for me.

My new friend promiſed her endeavours ſhould not be wanting for my welfare, and wiſhed me ſucceſs and happineſs.—Other diſcourſe enſued, and at laſt I took my leave, promiſing to wait on her the next day to tea.

The time arrived. When I entered, ſhe took me by the hand. Will you pardon the liberty I have taken, Miſs,

ſaid ſhe; there are ſo many impoſing adventurers in the world, that, notwithſtanding your outward appearance was ſo prepoſſeſſing, I could ſcarce truſt it. I knew Mrs. More to be a woman of veracity, therefore ſent for her this morning to enquire particulars concerning you. She ſatisfied my ſcruples, by aſſuring me you was recommended to her by Lady N——, from whoſe houſe you are juſt returned. No doubt therefore remaining, I muſt implore your pardon for daring to take ſo great a liberty, and inform you that it was occaſioned by having a ſettlement in view, which I thought you might approve. In juſtice to my friends, I could not introduce to them a perſon whoſe character I was not certain would bear ſcrutiny; and ſuppoſe, ſhould they require it, Lady N—— would not be againſt writing a line in your favour.

Heavens! my dear Harriot, till then I recollected not that diſadvantage.—I bluſhed, not knowing what anſwer to give; however, I at laſt ſtammered out, Lady N——, Madam, would perhaps honour me ſo far, but ſuch a requeſt would be an impertinence of which I had much rather not be guilty.—— Miſs Meynel, who reſides with her aunt, Lady Lorton, will thoroughly ſatisfy the lady concerning me. She was my ſchool-fellow——

I mean not, my amiable friend, interrupted ſhe, impertinently to catechize you. I have heard ſufficient to be ſatisfied concerning you. Was it myſelf, I ſhould not trouble any perſon, neither do I think my friends will, when I write them particulars.——She then informed

me, that Mr. Villars was the youngeſt brother of a late Lord of the ſame name; that his father had intended him for the army, which he, being of a ſtudious turn, did not approve. Lord Villars, a month or two before he intended to purchaſe a commiſſion for his ſon, accidentally became acquainted with Mr. Davies, a Welſh gentleman of great fortune. Mr. Davies had a daughter, who was ſole heireſs to his eſtate. Lord Villars thought ſuch an opportunity was not to be miſſed, and propoſed a match between Mr. Villars and the young lady. Mr. Davies readily conſented, as it gratified his pride to marry his daughter into ſo noble a family. Mr. Villars was commanded to pay his addreſſes to Miſs Davies. He expoſtulated on the cruelty of compelling him to marry a woman almoſt void of natural underſtanding,—a woman totally

tally different from his taſte, and whom he could never love. But his arguments were in vain. My Lord ſwore he ſhould either marry her, or be alienated from his family. Finding all remonſtrances diſregarded, Mr. Villars was forced to comply rather than ſubmit to beggary. When the nuptial knot was tied, he conveyed his bride to Elyſium-Place, and they have remained ever ſince in that ſolitary retreat, where they now reſide. Mr. Davies died in a few months after their marriage. A couſin of Mrs. Villars, having little or no fortune, reſided with them as a companion, but died lately: upon which Mr. Villars applied to Mrs. Gordon to recommend one to ſupply her place. "If you think, concluded ſhe, Miſs Howard, you can be content with ſo retired and confined a ſituation, ſpeak, and I will immediately write to Mr. Villars."

"Such a ſolitude is my utmoſt ambition, Madam, if they can approve of me from Miſs Meynel's recommendation—Lady N——"—I burſt into tears, unable to proceed.

"You have been ill treated by her, I ſee plainly, my dear Miſs Howard, returned ſhe. Mr. Villars ſhall take you from my recommendation alone—I am ſenſible you will never give me reaſon to repent it."

"I will not—indeed I will not, Madam," was all I was able to utter for ſome moments. She endeavoured to ſooth me by ſaying the virtuous were always the peculiar care of Providence. I am ſenſible of it, Madam, returned I at laſt; you are one of its inſtruments ſent to comfort me, and I hope ſome time hence will

will find it is not on an ungrateful or very unworthy object.

She ſat down to write immediately, and I took up a book to divert my melancholy reflections while ſhe was employed. I have been with her every day ſince, and find her ſo very amiable, that it is with difficulty I can conceal from her my genuine misfortunes. She expects an anſwer from Mr. Villars every day; but, as you will be impatient to hear from me, I will wait no longer for it. Do you think I may venture to unboſom myſelf to my new friend Mrs. Gordon? If you coincide with my inclination, which is ſtrongly bent on explicitneſs, ſend me the letters I wrote to you from Montpelier, &c. as they will ſave me the trouble of a recital which will too ſenſibly affect me. Write an

immediate anſwer, my dear Harriot, to

Your ever affectionate

SILENA HOWARD.

Miſs HOWARD *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Elyſium-Place.

YES, I am arrived hither, my deareſt Harriot. The day following that on which I diſpatched my letter to you, Mrs. Gordon received one from Mr. Villars, approving her recommendation, and adding, that his friend and neighbour, Mr. Shenkin, was in town, with his female appurtenances, which he thought a fortunate event, as he hoped they would afford me a corner of their coach to Elyſium-Place. He had written to Mr. Shenkin on the ſubject, who

was

was to inform Mrs. Gordon if he had no objection.

While I was ſitting with my friend that very evening Mr. Shenkin was announced. He is eſteemed a worthy, friendly man, but unhappily has a groteſque appearance. He is ſhort and fat, with ſmall eyes, and a face ſo red and carbuncled, that the beholder muſt infer from it the poſſeſſor is frequently guilty of inebriety; tho' appearances often deceive us.

Your ſarvant, Matam, ſaid he, as he entered the room; I was determined to take the firſt hopportunity to ſhew my friendſhip for Mr. Fillars; and, as I was dreſſed for Ranelagh, my daughter Winny ſaid I had better ſhew myſelf to the beſt advantage, as you was a ſtranger.—

She underſtands decorum, I aſſure you, Matam.

I don't in the leaſt doubt it, Sir, returned Mrs. Gordon; but I am happy to ſee my friends in any dreſs.

The ſervant put forward a chair for him.

You Lontoners, Matam, are all courtiers, ſaid he; Cot pleſs me, this is the young laddy I ſuppoſe I am to take charge of to nebbour Fillars.

I curteſyed an affirmative. Mrs. Gordon could with difficulty retain her countenance, but intreated him to be ſeated.

To be ſure, laddys, ſaid he, (after trying ſeveral times to ſit down without breaking

breaking his ſword); theſe warlike accoutrements are not calculated for peace or us country ſhentlemen.

True, Sir, returned Mrs. Gordon.

He with a little warmth ſtrove to extricate his ſword from the chair, and ſnapped the blade in the middle.

Wounds! ſaid he, this is the conſequence of wearing troubleſome purtenances one is not accuſtomed to. I'll have an iron one made—what matters it ſo the ſheath hides it, and there is a decent hilt; for certain I could not break that, and ſhall pleaſe my poor girl Winny by being dreſſed, as ſhe ſays, like a ſhentleman.—But you muſt excuſe me, laddys—plague take this thing——you muſt excuſe me—I muſt haſte home,

and ſend for another—No time is to be loſt.——I will call again tomorrow, and talk concerning our travels.—Your ſarvant, ſaid he, bowing in a hurry, and departed.

Thus, my dear Harriot, ended our firſt interview with Mr. Shenkin. It will let you a little into his character, and perhaps divert you. Before misfortunes were heaped ſo faſt upon me, I ſhould myſelf have laughed at his ſingularity; nay, I muſt confeſs on the road he frequently revived my long dormant riſibility, which I was obliged to aſſign to other cauſes than himſelf and family.

The day after his firſt viſit to Mrs. Gordon he paid a ſecond, and introduced his beloved daughter and her mother. As I know you are fond of

characters,

characters, I will endeavour to deſcribe them, tho' I have very little ſkill in that art. It is proper to begin firſt with Mrs. Shenkin.

She is about ſixty years of age, very ſhort, and almoſt of a breadth equal to her height. Her face, as well as Mr. Shenkin's, is unfortunately very red, and full of pimples. As her daughter is extravagantly fond of faſhion, ſhe has perſuaded her to have a wig, ſo enormouſly widened with wool and hair, that the beholder who has ſenſibility muſt be in continual anxiety when ſhe moves her head, leſt the load ſhould fall and diſplay her baldneſs. She is good-natured, but has ſome ſhare of pride, and is a genealogiſt. She boaſts much of her knowledge in cookery, and has her-ſelf had the ingenuity to invent ſeveral made-diſhes.

Miſs Shenkin is the doating-piece of her father and mother, who ſeldom or never contradict her. She is about thirty years of age, tall, thin, hard-featured, and naturally pale; but the latter defect ſhe remedies by a good quantity of rouge, which ſhe alleges no people of faſhion fail making uſe of; nay, that it it is abſolutely as neceſſary as powder. I had a longing deſire to tell her they put it on more judiciouſly then, for I really was aſhamed to be ſeen with her on the road, ſhe was ſo bedaubed. She has likewiſe been improving herſelf in Italian, in which language ſhe would frequently converſe with me, and laugh at her parents ruſticity. The worſt of a ſtate of dependance is the not being at liberty to reprove our ſuperiors for their follies. Miſs Shenkin, like all ſpoiled children, is of a violent diſpoſition,

but

but very affable while you coincide with her opinion. I only anſwered, that Mr. and Mrs. Shenkin made amends for their ruſticity by the goodneſs of their hearts. "True, Howard, returned ſhe, but it is impoſſible to forbear laughing at their extreme ſimplicity." In ſhort, Harriot, to conclude this lady's character, ſhe is girliſh, fantaſtical, and coquetiſh.

But let me return to my worthy friend Mrs. Gordon.

A week after the Shenkins were introduced to us, they fixed a time for our departure. We ſaw it arrive with regret.—My new friend often ſhed tears at the thoughts of our ſeparation.—I was moved likewiſe.—My ingratitude would have been unpardonable if I had not, obligated as I am to her for an aſylum,

lum, and by chance conducted to her friendſhip, which makes her benevolence ſtill riſe ſuperior to common acts.

Your kind letter came timely to recruit my ſpirits——You agree that I ſhould intruſt this amiable woman with my hiſtory. I have therefore promiſed her, that when your packet comes to hand, I will forward it by the firſt opportunity, and give a conciſe account of myſelf, which time would not then permit.

Miſs Shenkin pouted a little at leaving London, but her father telling her it was better for her health, and ſhe ſhould return next winter, a more pleaſant humour ſucceeded.

We alighted the third evening at an inn

inn on the borders of Wales. After tea Miſs Shenkin intreated me to walk with her. In my ſituation it would have been impertinent to refuſe. The evening was very warm.—At a diſtance we perceived a ſhady grove.

Heavens! ſaid ſhe, my dear Howard, let us haſten to that delightful retreat—perhaps the charming Zephyr loiters there, and will afford us a gentle breeze.

"Why, Madam, as we are alone, it is not ſo proper to venture, for"——

"O, for pity's ſake, ſtop, ma bella Silena, ſaid ſhe; you need not fear,—here are no beaus to tempt us."

"As to beaus, according to the ſtrict propriety of that word, returned I, I readily

readily allow there would be little danger:—Love is centered in themſelves—they wiſh only to diſplay their fine cloaths and genteel addreſs.——But, inſtead of them, we may meet with robbers—or rude country 'Squires, who"——

"Well, I am in ſpirits, ſaid ſhe, to run the hazard; it would only be an adventure."——

"An adventure!" echoed your friend.

"Aye, come along," ſaid ſhe, taking me under the arm.—We ſoon arrived at the grove.

——"Oh! kind retreat,
To ſhield one from the ſultry heat,"

repeated ſhe, ſeating herſelf at the foot of a tree, and deſiring me to ſit by her.

Night

Night approached—no creature was to be ſeen.—I began to be alarmed.

"For Heaven's ſake, Silena, enchant me with your delightful voice—Echo reſides here—ſhe will anſwer you."

"Oh! by no means, Ma'am, at preſent; let us, I conjure you, return to the inn.——I can't bear the gloom of this place—it reminds me of the ſorrows I have met with in life."——

If you will not ſing, I muſt, with my diſcordant ſounds, ſaid ſhe, and began with

"Che faro ſenza Euridice," &c.

A gentleman ruſhed from behind the tree.——Enchanting creature, ſaid he, catching her in his arms, thy tones would move the dead by their hideouſneſs,

neſs, but the charms of thy perſon make ample recompence.—Another came forward, but, perceiving by my countenance that I was in extreme terror, he bowed reſpectfully, and ſaid, I hope, Madam, you will excuſe my friend's behaviour—he is miſtaken—be not alarmed, we will conduct you back ſafe to the inn. Then going to ſpeak to his companion, he ſtarted, "Good God!—Miſs Shenkin!—I hope your worthy father is well."

"We left him ſo juſt now, Sir," returned ſhe, with affectation.

"My neighbour's daughter, my Lord."

His friend begged pardon for his rude behaviour, and was introduced as Lord Clandon.

Miſs

Miſs Shenkin likewiſe found an opportunity to inform me her neighbour was Mr. Clairville, who had about five years before bought an eſtate in their neighbourhood.

The gentlemen conducted us with the greateſt civility and politeneſs back to the inn: but, if we had been ſtrangers, Lord Clandon's firſt addreſs ſeemed to threaten different, and diſagreeable treatment, which I endeavoured afterwards to make Miſs Shenkin apprehend; but ſhe would not allow that ſhe had deviated from rectitude.

At our return her father was very glad to meet Mr. Clairville. Lord Clandon was introduced to him. They ſoon got ſociable over a bottle, and all was harmony.

Miſs

Miſs Shenkin fixed her attention on Lord Clandon, as ſhe flattered herſelf ſhe had made a conqueſt. His Lordſhip obſerved, with a leer to Mr. Clairville and myſelf, that he never beheld ſo *blooming* a complection; then joined in intreating a ſong of me, as he had heard Miſs Shenkin's requeſt in the grove. The old folks ſeconded them, and deſired their daughter to uſher forth her new guittar for me to accompany a ſong with.—It was produced. Tho' my ſpirits were reduced to the loweſt ebb, not to appear obſtinate and ill-natured, I complied. Their politeneſs made them paſs encomiums on my performance beyond its deſert.

The gentlemen accompanied us to Shenkin-Hall. Mr. Clairville treated me with the greateſt reſpect. Lord Clandon

don, when he had an opportunity, profeſſed a paſſion for me. Such a declaration afforded me great pain—I could only reject him by alleging the difference of our ſituation in life: but I ſuppoſe his deſigns are not honourable, tho' he believes me unmarried.—Few men chuſe to take a partner for life without fortune, eſpecially thoſe of ſo gay a turn as Lord Clandon. The difficulty of a married woman's being admitted into a family made me chuſe a maiden appellation; tho' it will, I begin to fear, precipitate me into many diſagreeable ſituations. There is ſomething extremely ſhocking in being addreſſed, conſcious as I am my real ſituation will not admit of it, tho' deſerted by my huſband. Good God! how cruelly am I plunged into diſtreſs!—I muſt not dwell on this dreadful ſubject, it tears my heart, and almoſt overpowers my ſenſes.

Mr. Villars did me the honour to come himſelf in his carriage to convey me to Elyſium-Place. He received me in a polite friendly manner. I was much affected, and trembled exceedingly, at my introduction to him, from reflecting upon the way of life I was entering into, and doubting whether I ſhould be capable of pleaſing Mrs. Villars. At laſt I made ſhift to utter that I hoped his lady would not be diſpleaſed with me, and that I would uſe my beſt endeavours to make myſelf agreeable to her.

Be compoſed, Miſs, returned Mr. Villars, kindly taking hold of my hand, I make no doubt of her being very happy in your friendſhip, from your own appearance, and the recommendation of our worthy friend Mrs. Gordon, beſides the applauſes of this family.

I could

I could ſcarce forbear ſhedding tears, my dear Harriot; but my ſtrong efforts againſt them happily prevailed, yet I could only curteſy thanks to Mr. Villars for his compliment.

I have been too ſhort a time with Mrs. Villars to judge of her thoroughly, my dear friend. Hitherto ſhe appears of an eaſy diſpoſition, but very weak intellects. She laughs inceſſantly, either at trifles or nothing. Mr. Villars is very polite and kind to her, but 'tis eaſily perceived that proceeds from the goodneſs of his heart, not his love for her. Tho' I really do not think her a diſagreeable woman as to perſon, yet, to a man of his refined ſentiments and excellent underſtanding, ſuch a wife muſt at firſt have occaſioned many an unhappy hour, as ſhe was not capable of enjoying the

amuſements in which he delighted. He is extremely fond of muſic, and plays admirably on ſeveral inſtruments. She has no taſte for muſic, or improvement of the mind by reading. Mr. Villars, finding the latter amuſement agreeable to me, is ſo obliging as to read to us often when we are at work. His lady frequently elopes from us, eſpecially ſince he has been reading Beliſarius, which ſhe laughs at, and ſays it is a ſad, dull, ſtupid ſtory. She happened to be preſent at the concluſion of it, which you know runs thus: "But, alas! he did "not ſurvive long enough for the good "of mankind in general, and the glory "of his maſter. The Emperor, quite "enfeebled and diſpirited, in the eve of "life, paid the tribute of a tear to the "memory of his departed hero, and "with that ſhort regret all the good

"councils

"councils of Beliſarius paſſed away, and "left no trace behind."

Mrs. Villars burſt out a laughing immoderately, ſaying, "I'm ſure the Emperor was much in the right of it—I am quite of his opinion—What ſignifies remembering ſuch a pack of ſtuff?—I declare I have forgot every ſyllable I've heard." Such is the woman I am going to paſs my days with, my dear friend. It is time for me to think of concluding this long epiſtle.

I ſhall expect ſoon to receive your packet of letters, that I may fulfil my promiſe to my worthy Mrs. Gordon. How thankful ought I to be to Providence for conducting me to this ſolitude.—The ſituation of it is delightful.—Yet, alas! my misfortunes, ſpite of all

efforts againſt it, will ariſe to my remembrance. The ocean, when calm, recals to my mind happier days, when a tender father and affectionate huſband ſoothed my hours in peace and love—but when the billows foam, I am all perturbation and diſtraction with it—I foreſee the gloomineſs and miſery of my future days, almoſt forget the reſignation and duty I owe to that omnipotent Being who formed me, and bluſh at my own weakneſs. Such is the ſtate of human nature, willing to do what is right, yet acting derogatory to that will. How frail is mortality!—But I forget that I had flattered you with hopes of a concluſion to this weariſome epiſtle, and that it is high time to ſign myſelf

Yours moſt affectionately,

SILENA HOWARD.

Miſs HOWARD *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Elyſium-Place.

I TAKE the earlieſt opportunity, my dear friend, of returning you thanks for the packet, which I received very ſafe, and have forwarded to Mrs. Gordon. The introductory part, which it was neceſſary to prefix, afforded me great pain in the recital.

When, oh! when ſhall I re-aſſume my accuſtomed chearfulneſs! The recollection of being almoſt a vagrant on earth almoſt overpowers me at times.

I feel much for Mrs. Villars's want of ſenſe: ſhe will laugh as much at an affecting ſtory as at a mirthful one. Mr. Villars, tho' accuſtomed to her manner,

viſibly receives a great ſhock from it before company. How unſuitably are they paired! But joy complete is not the lot of humanity, and for the beſt of purpoſes it is ſo appointed. This life is only a ſtate of probation. Temporal good is too apt to leſſen our dependance upon the great Author of our exiſtence, relax our endeavours to pleaſe him, and endanger our eternal felicity. Reſignation and patience in afflictions, therefore, are very neceſſary to promote our happineſs both here and hereafter.

I loſe a great deal of diverſion, I imagine, by not underſtanding the language of this country. The principal farmers wives (let not the idea of Engliſh ones enter your head) have ſometimes the honour of ſipping tea with us. Mr. Villars ſeems entertained with their ſimplicity,

plicity, and recitals of news, while your friend, like a fool, is obliged to be ſilent, and gains nothing by her attention. Adieu! my Harriot.

Yours ſincerely,

SILENA HOWARD.

Miſs HOWARD *to Mrs.* GORDON.

Elyſium-Place.

IN the midſt of my afflictions, what conſolation was it to meet with a friend whoſe heart was governed by the dictates of humanity, and who, unprejudiced by the maxims of the world, dared to take an intire ſtranger under her protection!—Such a one I found in you, Madam; the remembrance of it will never be eraſed from my heart, was I to live for ages. My gratitude and friend-

ſhip for my dear Mrs. Gordon will never ceaſe, till I ceaſe to breathe. She has ſent me to an aſylum of peace, at leaſt as much tranquility as my ſoul is capable of receiving, till time has in ſome meaſure worn off the recollection of my late ſorrows. Mrs. Villars is exceedingly kind to me; Mr. Villars treats me with the affection of a parent. How can I be better ſituated?

Muſt I awake ſo tender a heart to woe as that of my ever-dear, my amiable friend? Why did you deſire it? I wiſh for both our ſakes the taſk was compleated. I begin, Madam.

My father was——alas! already my tears begin to flow. Did that dear parent ſtill exiſt, Melville dared not have blaſted a reputation that——Pardon my incoherence,

incoherence, dear Mrs. Gordon; I will, if poſſible, ſuppreſs the torrent that ruſhes forth, and well nigh overwhelms me.—But reſolutions are ſooner formed than preſerved.

My father was the third ſon of the Earl of Walters, his name Belmont. He had juſt attained his one and twentieth year, when my grandfather died, leaving him 10,000l. He was then an enſign in the guards, but ſoon after marrying Miſs Nailor, he ſold out, and they ſettled in a houſe a few miles from London.

My mother was ſiſter to Lady N——. They both had very ſmall fortunes, tho' great connections, and were firſt-couſins to the Duke of ———. I was the only child my parents ever had, undoubtedly,

therefore was treated with the greater tenderneſs, and when of a proper age was put into one of the greateſt ſchools (or at leaſt one that bore the greateſt name) in London. There I met with my dear Harriot Meynel——there we formed a friendſhip in our infant years which has continued to a maturer age.

Mr. Meynel was a clergyman, who had a ſmall living in Berkſhire. Miſs Murray and her ſiſter, on a viſit in that neighbourhood, became acquainted with him. They were of a good family, but their father loſt his fortune by gaming: he had been lucky enough, however, to procure a place under government, which ſupported them genteely, nay, elegantly; but no proviſion was made for their ſubſiſtence after his death. He hoped, that, as they were handſome women, they

they would make their fortunes by marriage; a very precarious chance. At that period, indeed, he had ſome reaſon for this hope, as the Earl of Lorton was then paying his addreſſes to the elder Miſs Murray. Love prevented the other from making her fortune according to his wiſhes. She and Mr. Meynel exchanged affections. Her ſiſter, who always had high ideas, and a great deal of pride, reproved her for being ſo mean-ſpirited—Her father ſtormed—But all was to no purpoſe. The lovers choſe to embrace a limited income together, rather than be ſeparated: they married. Her ſiſter from thenceforward caſt off all regard for her, and ſoon after gave her hand to the Earl of Lorton.

Mrs. Meynel, neglected by her father and ſiſter, was, notwithſtanding, very

happy with her huſband, and frequently indulged with the company of her dear friend Mrs. Moreton. About four years after their marriage Harriot was born. Mrs. Moreton, who was indefatigable in their favour, made intereſt and procured Mr. Meynel a living about that time, of ſix hundred a year.

Mr. Murray died without ſeeing Mrs. Meynel, and left ſcarcely a ſufficiency to pay his debts.

Mr. Meynel's income being increaſed, at a proper age they ſent their beloved daughter to the ſchool where I found her, from whence ſhe often uſed to viſit Mrs. Moreton. Before we left ſchool Mrs. Meynel died. At length Harriot returned to her father. He fell ill. He had ſaved but a few hundreds. What

was

was to become of his darling? She was beautiful to exceſs; but beauty is only a ſnare to betray its poſſeſſor. He trembled for her fate, and was in great anxiety on her account, when he received the following note from Mrs. Moreton, who was at London, and had heard of his dangerous illneſs.

"LET not care for your child embitter your laſt moments, my dear Sir. My eſteem for you, and regard for my ever-amiable and departed friend Mrs. Meynel, will make me endeavour all my weak efforts can for the welfare of their Harriot. I will ſtrive to make Lord and Lady Lorton ſenſible of what they ought to do for her. Should they remain obdurate, ſhe ſhall be my adopted child. Calmly reſign her, therefore, to me, while your diſembodied ſoul takes its flight

flight to that Elyſium where all ſublunary afflictions are buried in oblivion. Adieu.

M. Moreton."

Mrs. Moreton's letter had the deſired effect. The good man, truſting in her and Providence, reſigned his ſoul to its Maker.

This worthy woman, being apprized of his death, immediately came and conveyed Miſs Meynel to London. Lord and Lady Lorton were then in Ireland. She wrote them word in the moſt affecting manner of Harriot's loſs. They were not quite proof againſt her eloquence, and anſwered, that when they came to London they perhaps might ſee her. Their only ſon, whom they doated on, was then going on his travels, and

was

was to ſet out from Dublin at the ſame time they ſhould ſet out for London.

Mrs. Moreton's health declined daily. Lady Lorton at laſt arrived. Mrs. Moreton ſent to inform her of her ill health and inability to wait on her, with the moſt ſoothing interceſſion for her young friend Harriot. Lady Lorton honoured them with a viſit, and complimented my friend on her beauty, withal adviſing her to make a better uſe of it than her mother had done, and promiſed to give her an opportunity by introducing her into public.

The worthy, the friendly Mrs. Moreton died, and left Harriot under the protection of her aunt. Miſs Meynel ſhed many tears for the loſs of her beſt friend. Lady Lorton's haughtineſs at times diſquieted

quieted my amiable Harriot, notwithſtanding her vivacity, of which ſhe has a great ſhare. In public ſhe was exceedingly admired, in private had many good offers; but, fortunately, no title making application, her aunt was not ſo much diſpleaſed at her refuſing them. She took her to Dublin with the family, where they will continue till next winter. Lord and Lady Lorton, ſhe finds, intend then to leave her behind with an intimate friend in high life, to ſee if ſhe can make her fortune there, or at leaſt till their ſon, who next winter is to return from his travels, is properly married, leſt her beauty ſhould enſnare him. Thus at preſent reſts the ſituation of my beloved Harriot Meynel.

After making you acquainted with my friend's hiſtory, it is time to return

to

to my own. At ſixteen I was taken from ſchool; half a year after which my tender and affectionate mother died—a loſs irreparable. My father was almoſt inconſolable: and ſoon after, to heighten his affliction, he loſt his whole fortune by the bankruptcy of a merchant in whoſe hands he had lodged it, till he ſhould purchaſe a landed eſtate which he had in view. His heart was almoſt broke at this ſecond ſhock. Folding me in his arms, he would often exclaim, 'Tis for thee, my dear Adelaide, I weep; as for myſelf, I ſhall not long want it now my Almeria is gone——but for thee to be left a prey to inhuman ſtrangers, without a parent to guide thee, or fortune to ſhield thee from the frowns of an unpitying world, alas!——

Ah! my dear, my honoured father, interrupted

terrupted I, the virtuous precepts you have taught me will never be obliterated from my memory.—I hope you will live long to guide me; but, ſhould that bleſſing be denied, Providence, I truſt, will direct and protect me. The Almighty never forſakes the innocent: he has promiſed to become a father to the orphan, a friend to the diſtreſſed, if they invoke his ſuccour.

My darling child, anſwered this tender parent, your ſentiments afford me unſpeakable pleaſure. May you always continue to cheriſh them!

He wrote to the Earl his brother, who, tho' he had not been an affectionate relation, then took compaſſion on us, ſettled 400l. a year on my father during life, and promiſed to take care of me after his deceaſe.

A heart formed like my father's, you may be ſure, expreſſed his gratitude in the ſtrongeſt terms.

Some months after, his health declining, by the phyſician's advice he conſented to go to Montpelier for its recovery. It amended a little. I correſponded with Miſs Meynel, and gave her an account of every particular that paſſed; therefore will now refer you to my letters to her, as they contain my ſentiments at the time they were written, and will ſave me many a ſevere pang, by relieving me from a freſh recital of my paſt misfortunes.

Miſs

Miſs BELMONT *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Montpelier.

THE amendment of my father's health makes me quite happy. We have been together at a delightful concert, performed at Madame D'Ancour's; and ſuch a youth was there, my dear Harriot!—the ladies all doat on him, "he is ſo *charmant:*" in ſhort, the Marquis of Melville has gained the appellation of the *bel Anglois.* My heart is ſtill cold as ice, tho' I have received many douceurs from him, my dear girl. I think you would have retired with the loſs of yours, as he has a great deal of vivacity, and is juſt what you admire. We have had a ball too, my Harriot, and he did me the honour to dance with me: but he has an earneſtneſs in his expreſſion,

preſſion, a kind of fury and fire in his deportment, that is to me diſagreeable. My father admires him, therefore I am ſilent. It matters not, as an acquaintance, what he is. The reaſon of his being here is to attend a rich old uncle, who was recommended to this place to prolong his life.

I was interrupted from my pen by a viſit from the Marquis of Melville. Being alone, he made uſe of the opportunity ſeriouſly to declare a paſſion for me, which I returned as raillery, thinking it really ſo: but he aſſured me with the utmoſt earneſtneſs he could not live without me. "Oh! what an Oroondates!—quite a romance hero." His language made it very difficult for me to ſuppreſs laughter. I told his Lordſhip I found

he

he had been ſome time in France by his very gallant addreſs. My father's entrance relieved me, and I withdrew to inform you of my new lover. What do you think of my being a Marchioneſs? Heaven forbid!—at leaſt that I ſhould become Melville's wife. His haſty temper would keep me in a continual terror and tremor. He has too much ſpirit for my taſte. Adieu! my dear Harriot. Continue to love your very affectionate

ADELAIDE BELMONT.

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

AH! my dear friend, my father is relapſed. I am very uneaſy—I fear much that he will never recover. This Marquis, too, torments me paſt deſcription; he

he is either with or writing to me continually. My father ſeems to favour his addreſſes; that adds to my affliction: for, to be ſerious with you, my dear Harriot, the Marquis really has a violence of temper which would intirely prevent my loving him as a huſband; I ſhould rather fear him as a tyrant.—My father ſends for me to attend him.

❁ ❁

I am undone!——I informed you of the Marquis's haſty temper.—He has artfully gained my father's conſent.—A private marriage too!—Good God! what will become of me? Muſt I diſobey my father—let him retire with ſorrow to his grave, by denying what I fear is his laſt requeſt? Ah! no—I muſt not. Alas! he hourly declines: 'tis the height of his affection makes him exhort me to it.

" My

" My Adelaide, ſaid he, receive the Marquis when he next comes as your huſband.—He has my conſent.—But for both your ſakes the ceremony muſt be performed in private, as his uncle, on whom he depends for ſix thouſand a year, would diſinherit him, was he to know of it. He is in an ill ſtate of health, as well as myſelf, therefore you will not long be obliged to preſerve the ſecret. The Marquis is handſome and amiable; you have no prepoſſeſſion, therefore cannot reject him. Conſent, my dear Adelaide, to let your marriage take place the day after tomorrow. I cannot ſurvive many days, and it will make me die contented, as I ſhall then be certain of your being provided for. As to my brother, tho' he has kindly beſtowed his bounty upon me, I cannot be ſure he will on you after my deceaſe.—I have

not

not confidence in him concerning you.—Will you conſent, Adelaide?"

Ah! Harriot, gueſs if you can the horror of my ſoul at ſuch a requeſt—the requeſt of a dying father. That idea made me immediately comply. "I conſent, Sir, ſaid I, if that will make you happy." He thanked me, and I retired to weep. Yes, Harriot, I will ſacrifice myſelf for the ſatisfaction of the tendereſt of parents: but, alas! I cannot love the man deſtined to be my huſband.

I have ſeen the Marquis, who is in raptures at my conſent. Oh! the vanity of his ſex! He imagines my coolneſs to him proceeds from the being ſhocked at my dear parent's approaching end. Undoubtedly I am ſeverely ſo; but, if

otherwiſe, I ſhould behave the ſame to him. Tomorrow—alas! tomorrow I am to become a bride!—a mournful one, indeed. The worthy and Rev. Mr. Blake, who is going to leave this place, is to unite us. This is the laſt time, therefore, your unfortunate friend will have a right to ſubſcribe herſelf

ADELAIDE BELMONT.

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

MY father ſeems to acquire ſtrength and health, which enables me to bear with the greater fortitude my having been three days the wife of Melville. If the ladies of this place were acquainted with the ſecret, what an object of envy ſhould I become? They are all enchanted

enchanted with the Marquis, who has no eyes for any one but me. Indeed he is tender and affectionate.—I ought now to have a reciprocal affection.—I muſt, I will, bring myſelf to eſteem him.—But he has ſomething in his manner that terrifies me—I cannot without reſtraint acquaint him with my ſentiments.—He has not that ſoftneſs and delicacy in his manner which I ſhould have looked for in a huſband: but, as my fate is fixed, I muſt make the beſt of it. He has given me a title—He has received me to his arms without a fortune—Where is my gratitude? Alas! my Harriot, I reprove myſelf for the want of it in this point. How many would rejoice in my ſituation? Vanity, thou wonted attendant of the female breaſt, whither art thou fled? Hither fly and lull mine to repoſe. Ah! my friend, in vain I in-

voke her aid, having hitherto rejected her. Reflection taught me to deſpiſe the tranſitory honours of this variable world—My wiſhes were placed on ſolitude and calm repoſe.

I am charmed with the Hiſtory of Nouſchirvan the Great, King of Perſia. The inſcription he cauſed to be put on his diadem ſhews a great fortitude of ſoul.—It runs thus:

" What is long life, or what a glorious reign,
" Since our ſucceſſors quick upon us tread!
" My fathers left this crown; that royal train
" Myſelf muſt cloſe, and mingle with the dead."

I was obliged to lay aſide my pen, as the Marquis came to remind me it was time to attend Madame D'Oran's private concert.

concert. My father, tho' not able to go himſelf, inſiſted upon my going; and the Marquis conducted me. His kind attention excited the whiſpers of the company, who imagine me ſtill Miſs Belmont. Some ventured to compliment me on the conqueſt I had made, which I only anſwered by a ſmile. Mademoiſelle Albe added, I was very fortunate, for ſhe thought him the handſomeſt creature exiſting. She ſpoke it with ſuch earneſtneſs, that I have ſince beheld him with more attention, to find it out. If manly beauty alone could captivate, he certainly claims the prize of all hearts. When publicly acknowledged as his wife, I undoubtedly ſhall be much envied, which I am not ambitious of: but that is more eaſily borne than a pitiable condition, as it argues that the object muſt be happy. Adieu! my Harriot.

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

I Begin to eſteem the Marquis, and with leſs reluctance admit his endeavours to pleaſe me. He obſerves it, and is more aſſiduous than ever. But, alas! pleaſure is never unalloyed by pain.—My father is relapſed, and I fear for him beyond expreſſion. Literally ſpeaking, I fear for myſelf. He is advancing to happineſs, and, as he ſays, to meet his beloved Almeria, never more to be ſeparated. I am going to experience the moſt inexpreſſibly cutting ſorrow by the loſs of him. He is conſtantly returning me thanks for my dutiful behaviour, as he terms it, in receiving the Marquis for my huſband, as it makes him meet his end with compoſure and content,

content, perfectly ſatisfied with leaving me under the protection of ſo tender and affectionate a huſband.

❁ ❁

Alas! my dear Harriot, my father draws very near his end. The phyſicians ſay he cannot live above two days longer. My dear Melville is continually conſoling me, and endeavouring to alleviate my affliction. I begin to love him. My father ſeems quite pleaſed, tho' in pain, by obſerving his kindneſs to me. Gratitude awakens love in my heart; for my father's ſake I repeat I love him.

❁ ❁

The dreadful moment is paſſed. I have loſt the beſt, the tendereſt of fathers. Grief is beſt indicated by ſilence. Adieu!—I cannot hold my pen. Pity your diſtreſſed ADELAIDE.

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

AS ſoon as I regained ſufficient ſpirits to write, I acquainted my friends in England of the loſs I had ſuſtained. Lady N—— was ſo kind as immediately to anſwer my letter, and aſſure me of a welcome reception at her houſe, withal adviſing me to ſtay as ſhort a time as poſſible in a place where I muſt remain my own miſtreſs, for that a young woman without a protector was in a dangerous and improper ſituation.

How affectionate, how kind, how thoughtful, is her Ladyſhip for my welfare! Indeed, my dear Harriot, her letter made me ſhed tears of thanks and gratitude. It was greatly beyond my expectation,

expectation, or my poor departed father's, that after his deceaſe ſhe would make ſuch an offer; otherwiſe I believe he would not have deſired me to marry the Marquis, or I have conſented, as I did not then eſteem him: but my regard for him now daily increaſes, he is ſo exceedingly tender and affectionate, dedicating to me all the time he can poſſibly ſpare without creating ſuſpicion.

I ſhewed him Lady N——'s letter.—He caught me in his arms, and earneſtly intreated me not to leave him, but to make ſome excuſe to her Ladyſhip, ſuch as an indifferent ſtate of health, which would render it neceſſary for me to ſtay; telling me, at the ſame time, he was ſure his uncle (not that he wiſhed his death) could not ſurvive many weeks longer, and then he ſhould have the happineſs

of publicly acknowledging me for his wife, which would thoroughly remove all Lady N——'s ſuſpicions to my prejudice, ſhould ſhe harbour any before that period: he added, that it would be running too great hazard to acquaint her with the ſecret before his uncle's death, as our letters might miſcarry, or fall into ſtrange hands, as well as for various other obvious reaſons; and he was certain, he ſaid, my father, if living, would be of his opinion.

I readily acquieſced, and wrote to Lady N——, informing her that my health was ſo indifferent, I could not quit Montpelier till it was in ſome degree re-eſtabliſhed, and I had got the better of the ſhock occaſioned by the loſs of my tender father; but that I ſhould then with the greateſt pleaſure throw

throw myſelf at her feet, and return her thanks perſonally for her very kind and affectionate attention to me.

I hope ſoon to hear, my dear Harriot, that, among the train of lovers you meet with at Lady Lorton's, you have fixed on and made yourſelf happy with one. Wait not for what romantic youth calls love, my Harriot—it is mere folly. I now love the Marquis as much as it is poſſible I believe for a woman to love her huſband. That fear of him with which I was once poſſeſſed is almoſt conquered. Parents and friends are, doubtleſs, the beſt judges of what will conduce to our felicity. Thoſe violent paſſions we ſo frequently read of are very ſeldom, if ever, found in real life. Girls, by reading ſuch romances, imbibe notions which they never eradicate. Love

at firſt ſight, as it is called by ſome giddy females, is more frequently attracted by the cloaths than the man; and the generality of the ſex are ſo blinded, that they do not till it is too late (I mean after marriage) perceive their error. But that will never be the caſe of my Harriot. When ſhe does fix her affection, I am certain it will be on an object for whom ſhe will never have cauſe to bluſh. With this civil concluſion I remain, my ever-loved friend,

Yours moſt faithfully,

ADELAIDE.

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

MAdemoiſelle Albe is become my tormentor. Notwithſtanding my frequent

quent denials and excuſes of ill health, ſhe is perpetually haunting me, and launching out into almoſt indecent encomiums on the Marquis. When he is preſent, ſhe ogles, flirts, and practiſes all her arts, to gain his attention. He deſpiſes her grimace, and urges me to behave rudely to her, in order to free myſelf from her folly. The only excuſe I can form for her is, ſhe knows not that we are united beyond a power of ſeparation; but under this ſuppoſition her conduct is highly cenſurable. Is not the woman chargeable with groſs treachery who exerts all her charms and art to ſeduce the affection of an amiable lover from the perſon for whom ſhe pretends to have a friendſhip? But ſhe is a coquette unworthy my attention. Yet I am ſometimes tempted to pity her, and almoſt imagine ſhe has a ſincere

cere ungovernable paſſion for the Marquis, which urges her, though in ſo imprudent a manner, to diſcover it to him, in hopes of moving his compaſſion, and, by ripening that ſentiment into love, of bringing about a marriage between them. Poor Mademoiſelle Albe, if ſuch really be the caſe, pity is indeed thy due!

Mr. Ancram, Melville's uncle, is now much better, and ſometimes ventures out. I have ſeen him at Madame D'Oran's, and endeavoured to make myſelf pleaſing to him hitherto to no purpoſe. He has an averſion to women in general, but Madame D'Oran is rather a favourite, therefore I hope thro' her means to become one too.

Madame Hermond is the moſt agree-

able

able lady, to my taſte, that I have met with here. She is perfectly amiable, having a fine perſon and addreſs, accompanied with a brilliant wit and a pleaſing modeſty. It is a ſort of wit, which, when diſplayed, hurts not thoſe with whom ſhe converſes; not that *bon ton* or pert vivacity which ſhocks a feeling mind by its rudeneſs. Madame Hermond's witticiſms are refined, being the reſult of a clear head and an honeſt and liberal heart. But, alas! engaging as ſhe is beyond deſcription, ſhe is a miſerable victim to wealth. Her guardians compelled her to marry Monſ. Hermond, a man many years her ſenior, a ſot, and a fool; a man who has ſpent all his days, and ſtill continues to ſpend them, in debauchery; and who, by being accuſtomed to converſe and cohabit with the vileſt of women, thinks there is no difference

in

the conduct of the ſex. Hence he is continually ſuſpicious of his own and his wife's honour; and when in company, if any gentlemen happen to be preſent, ſhe muſt not laugh, ſmile, or converſe but in a laconic way; thus concealing the ſenſe Heaven has ſo bountifully beſtowed upon her. In ſhort, Harriot, to deſcribe the wretched life ſhe leads is beyond the power of my pen. In order to have the pleaſure of her company, before him I appear grave, reſerved, and prim, to a ridiculous degree, whence he concludes I am a tolerably decent young woman, and therefore gives her free leave to ſpend as much of her time as ſhe pleaſes with me. Few men beſides the Marquis viſit me, and him Monſ. Hermond imagines to be my aſſured lover. Madame Hermond avails herſelf of her huſband's permiſſion, and

we frequently read and work alternately together. How deſerving is this lady of a better fate!

Your heart is ſtill your own, you avow, and thank Heaven your aunt leaves you free, as you are in no hurry to become a wife; but that you ſincerely congratulate me on my happineſs in having ſo amiable a huſband, and that you long for a peep at us both. Curioſity excites you to wiſh to view Melville, and love, friendſhip, every tender ſentiment, make you long to ſee his Adelaide again. Ah! my dear Harriot, when I return to England as Melville's wife, Lady Lorton muſt reſign you to me, to complete my happineſs. You muſt make my dwelling yours till a ſovereign commander ſnatches you from me; then, indeed, I muſt yield, tho' reluctantly. Adieu! my dear, my amiable friend.

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

WE are frequently ſurprized at the conduct of others, becauſe we know not the motives of their acting in ſuch a manner as to our apprehenſion appears ridiculous. I was led to this reflection by a ſcene that occurred yeſterday at my houſe. Madame Hermond came to tea. We had ſcarce commenced the ceremony, when her huſband was announced. I gueſſed he came as a ſpy, to be convinced all was ſafe; and therefore was very glad we were alone, and that not even the Marquis was with us: but my joy was of ſhort duration; for Melville ſoon after entered with Monſ. D'Oran. D'Oran is very gay and ſprightly; he is huſband to the lady I mentioned in a former

former letter. I made a ſtiff curteſy, and formally inquired after his lady. He burſt out into an immoderate laughter. (Poor Madame Hermond coloured, ſenſible of the reaſon of my reſerve, and dreading a ſtorm.) Monſ. Hermond ſtared at D'Oran. Melville, who knew Hermond's jealous diſpoſition, bid his friend ſit down, and apologized for him to Monſ. Hermond by ſaying he had juſt met with a droll adventure in the ſtreet, which he ſuppoſed ſtill kept up his riſibility.

Hermond ſeemed diſſatisfied with that excuſe, and ſuſpicious of he knew not what; and his wife's changing colour (thro' fear) was another alarm to him.

D'Oran looked exceedingly ſurprized at us all, never having found me in ſo reſerved

reſerved a humour before. At laſt, recovering his ſpeech, he exclaimed, "Mais mon Dieu! Miſs Belmont!"——I found my amiable friend was in great diſtreſs, leſt his vivacity ſhould occaſion a diſagreeable return from her huſband, and therefore I endeavoured to ſtop his proceeding by ſaying, with a prudiſh air, "Let me beg, Sir, you will not ſpeak ſo loud, for my head aches exceedingly—I believe you ſat too long after dinner to-day, for you are in prodigious ſpirits." He was, notwithſtanding, going to exclaim again, when I gave Melville a nod, who under pretence of buſineſs took him away. Before he departed, however, he inſiſted upon my waiting on Madame D'Oran as to-day; "and my dear Madame Hermond you muſt come too," added he in his thoughtleſs way. Melville then forced him from us at a for-

tunate

tunate moment, for he was on the point of ſeconding his requeſt by kiſſing the lady's hand, which would have driven Monſ. Hermond almoſt beſide himſelf: as it was, he was very much diſpleaſed, and ſwore by his good faith that D'Oran was a very impertinent fellow to dare to take ſuch liberties with his wife as to call her his *dear*, that it was with difficulty he had reſtrained himſelf from kicking the puppy out of the room, &c. but on my account he would not cauſe a diſturbance. As for Melville, he appeared to be a worthy young gentleman, but wondered he would countenance ſuch a fellow, who knew not how to behave in modeſt womens company, or my decent behaviour would have kept him in awe.

I alleged, in D'Oran's defence, that he

he was in liquor, and laid the blame on the Marquis for introducing him in that condition: but the converſation was not to drop ſo. Monſ. Hermond began to wrangle with his unhappy wife; he ſwore ſhe ſhould never more viſit Madame D'Oran, for he did not doubt that ſhe would be very ready to engage in an intrigue with that fellow, if it had not commenced before.——She muſt have given him encouragement, or he would never have dared to addreſs her in that free manner; with a great deal more provoking nonſenſe much to the ſame purpoſe; which his poor wife anſwered only by tears. I took the liberty, notwithſtanding his fury, to harangue in her favour. By degrees his rage ſubſided, and I brought him to own, with reluctance, that if D'Oran was intoxicated, it rendered his behaviour leſs culpable;

pable; but he inſiſted, nevertheleſs, his wife ſhould deſiſt from viſiting Madame D'Oran. As for me, I was a decent, prudent young woman, and, provided I would promiſe not to admit that impudent fellow into company when his wife was preſent, ſhe might continue my acquaintance. So ſaying, he repaired to his uſual companions. Poor Madame Hermond's ſpirits were exceedingly depreſſed, and I could not perſuade her to ſtay ſupper.

The Marquis and Monſ. D'Oran returned when they found the oddity was gone. The latter entered with an obſequious bow, and "I hope I have the honour to ſee Miſs Belmont well," was uttered with an air of gravity at which it was my turn to laugh.

"I am

" I am practiſing propriety of behaviour, ſaid he, in caſe I ſhould fall into company with Monſ. Hermond again. My God! I could not conceive what you would be at with your preciſeneſs and formality. Indeed, I had heard the wretch was jealous of his wife to deſperation, and that his ſentiments were particular on every point, but I had no idea of his being here, as he never attends ſuch good company, neither had I any conception mirth was a crime. You cannot form in your imagination, my dear Miſs Belmont, how ſurprized I was at your behaviour and Melville's. Bon Dieu! O the wretch! he deſerves the moſt ſevere puniſhment for thus torturing ſo amiable a woman!"

Certainly my poor friend's fate is to be lamented; but our moſt unbounded pity

pity cannot redreſs her misfortune. To be continually ſuffering the ſuſpicion of her huſband for the worſt of crimes, which ſhe is innocent of, requires fortitude, patience, and a confidence in God, who is the obſerver of her hard endurance. She is poſſeſſed of theſe virtues, but at the ſame time her ſenſibility of his ill treatment cauſes her infinite pain.

I have received another kind letter from Lady N——, who urges me to come to her as ſoon as my health will permit. I muſt continue to deceive her, as it is impoſſible for me to quit the Marquis.

❁ ❁

I am extremely ſhocked, my dear Harriot, at the dreadful news which has juſt arrived; a certain account that the ſhip

which the worthy Mr. Blake ſailed in for Leghorn was wrecked very near the deſtined port. One man only eſcaped, who ſaw all the reſt periſh. We have now no witneſs left of our marriage, only a certificate remains which that unfortunate man left with me. Yet it is not from ſelfiſhneſs that I bemoan his loſs. I have no reaſon to diſtruſt my dear Melville's honour. Mr. Blake's loſs will be ſeverely felt by many. He was a father to the friendleſs—He cheriſhed the diſtreſſed—He was——but, alas! he is now no more. Tears ſucceed each other ſo faſt I cannot write.—Adieu!

From

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

MR. Ancram, diſguſted with Mademoiſelle Albe for behaving with her accuſtomed ridiculous fondneſs to the Marquis, has forbidden his nephew to ſpeak to her, and ſeems diſpoſed to be rather favourable to me. Melville is highly delighted at it, and conceives hopes beyond my expectation. That they may be happily fulfilled is my conſtant and ardent wiſh, for I fear Slander with her envenomed tongue will aid ſuſpicion, and openly calumniate my intimacy with the Marquis, and his attentions to me.

I can't help complaining to you, my amiable Harriot, of this private mar-

riage—it wounds my delicacy. Tho' I love Melville, and he is the tendereſt of huſbands, I am diſtreſſed. To be obliged to ſee him privately—to give the world an opportunity of misjudging my conduct—to conceal my ſituation from my affectionate aunt——theſe circumſtances, I ſay, diſtreſs me much. I comfort myſelf, however, with Melville's hope that the neceſſary period of theſe ſufferings will be but ſhort.

That wretch Hermond will not let me ſee his amiable wife ſo often as uſual. I miſs her agreeable company exceedingly, and am obliged to ſupply her place with Madame D'Oran. She is an agreeable woman, but ſhe has not the ſprightly wit of Madame Hermond;—the difference between them is great indeed.—Adieu! my deareſt friend.

From

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

OUR hopes are blaſted, my dear Harriot. I ſhall not now have an opportunity of ingratiating myſelf into Mr. Ancram's favour. His health amends ſo ſlowly, that the phyſicians have adviſed him to go to Nice, thinking that air will be more beneficial to him. As the Marquis muſt attend him, he is extremely grieved at the thoughts of parting with me. Indeed, he would fain perſuade me to follow him to that place, and live incog. at ſome houſe under a feigned name. I have argued on the impropriety of ſuch a conduct; and he at laſt, unwillingly, has conſented to leave me behind. He will not permit me by any means to go to England, as I ſhall

be nearer him here. I am very low-ſpirited at the thoughts of his departure, but muſt ſubmit, as it is unavoidable.

Mademoiſelle Albe has been dangerouſly ill, and was ſo imprudent as to entreat an interview with the Marquis, who returned a polite refuſal. She then ſent for me. Upon being informed of her ſituation, I immediately complied with her requeſt. She complained much of Melville's treatment; and declaring, with a vehemence that indicated diſtraction, how much ſhe adored him, notwithſtanding his cruelty to her, begged me to interceed with him in her behalf, ſo far as at leaſt to treat her with common humanity—to viſit her once—to ſay he wiſhed her health—to——

I prevented her proceeding by aſking if

if the Marquis had ever given her reaſon to imagine he loved her.

She ſtarted. No, returned ſhe, I can't ſay he ever did; but perhaps he might if you had never come to this place.—Deſtruction to my peace of mind! he loves only you, and I adore him in vain. Ah! happy woman, you will ſome time hence become his wife; while I—racks and tortures!—while I muſt end my days in miſery.

A delirium ſucceeded, ſhe talked wildly, and in rage. I was affrighted, but unwilling to leave her in that ſtate. In half an hour's time ſhe became more calm. I then reaſoned with her on the folly and indiſcretion of giving way to her paſſions, which ſhe ought to endeavour to ſubdue; and, being obliged to

diſſemble, told her ſhe was miſtaken in thinking the Marquis had fixed his affection on me; but that I believed he was engaged to a young lady in England who bore ſome reſemblance to my perſon, which made him covet my company. I hoped ſhe would reflect upon the impropriety of her conduct, and, ſince it was impoſſible to force the regard of Melville, endeavour to forget him by avoiding his preſence, as abſence was generally found the beſt means of relief by thoſe unfortunate perſons who entertained a hopeleſs paſſion.

"A hopeleſs paſſion! Madam," returned ſhe with a countenance full of agony.—"A hopeleſs paſſion!" Do you ſpeak of me with ſuch contempt? Her delirium returned, and I was forced to quit the room, extremely ſhocked at her condition.

In a few days after, the fever having left her, and her health amending, ſhe ſent for me again: the reſult of which was, her ſubmiſſively begging my pardon, and blaming herſelf highly for her want of temper to ſo kind a friend. She owned, that on reflection ſhe was ſenſible that I had given her ſalutary advice; and, being convinced of her paſt miſconduct, ſhe hoped for the future not to act in ſo reprehenſible a manner; and, to prevent her relapſing, ſhe added, ſhe was going to bid adieu to Montpelier, and the too dear object of her affection, as ſoon as her health would permit; for an aunt of hers, who reſided at Paris, having long wiſhed to ſee her, ſhe ſhould on the preſent occaſion fulfil her deſires by going to that gay city; and, concluded ſhe, with a ſmile, perhaps I may find a new lover there who

may make me amends for all I have ſuffered on account of the Marquis.

I ſincerely wiſh you may, returned I; nothing is more probable. Nature has been bountiful to your perſon, and where the heart is not pre-engaged you muſt conquer.

Ah! Miſs Belmont, you flatter.——Alas! there are few men to be met with comparable to the Marquis.—I ſhall never love any other, ſaid ſhe, ſighing, how then can I ever be happy?——But, added ſhe, ſtarting from her ſeat in a ſprightly manner, I will revenge myſelf on the perfidious ſex, at leaſt thoſe I can enthral:—To uſe them with cruelty, and exert my power, ſhall be my diverſion.

I could not refrain from laughing, my

my dear Harriot, at the drollery with which ſhe recited her intention; but I returned her no anſwer, and ſoon after took my leave.

This unhappy woman's ſituation would affect me more, did I not imagine that the amuſements of Paris, and the gallantry always in vogue there, will ſoon ſet her heart at eaſe. She is a perfect coquette. The Marquis's inattention piqued her ambition, vanity, and ſelf-love. There are few beaus here, therefore he is the more conſpicuous. I don't doubt but ſhe will ſoon forget him. But I muſt loſe him, Harriot—He will be compelled to leave me ſoon. If it could be done without an apparent breach of decorum, with what pleaſure ſhould I attend him! How great will be my anxiety and regret at parting with

him! Ah! Harriot, perhaps we may never meet again.—Who can tell what will happen? Adieu! During my exiſtence I ſhall ever remain

Your truly affectionate

ADELAIDE.

From the Same to the Same.

Montpelier.

THE Marquis was in ſuch exceſs of grief at leaving me, that it almoſt overpowered my ſenſes to ſee him in ſo melancholy a condition. It was paſt deſcription. My reſolution drooped, and had he preſſed me then to follow him I ſhould have conſented. His tenderneſs excites my warmeſt gratitude. It is ſcarcely conceivable in real life. He expreſſes, and indeed ſeems to feel, all

all the warmth of a lover in romance.—I pity him, as I think it muſt render him unhappy to be ſo ſuſceptible. He has my eſteem, and all the love I am capable of feeling. Dear Melville! how wilt thou ſupport this ſeparation? I am very unhappy on thy account.

Monſ. and Madame D'Oran will not ſuffer me to be alone, tho' they know not of our union. They imagine the Marquis my lover, and kindly endeavour all in their power to divert me in his abſence.

My aunt will think ſtrangely of my long ſtay here, and diſobedience. She writes me word all my friends are ſurprized at my remaining here. But it muſt be ſo. The Marquis's uncertain ſtay at Nice diſturbs me; many diſagreeable

able events may reſult from it. I am low-ſpirited, my dear friend, and muſt lay aſide my pen. Adieu!

Marquis of MELVILLE *to Miſs* BELMONT.

Nice.

DIſtraction rends my brain, adorable Adelaide! I cannot live—I cannot breathe—without you. Cruel woman! you know not what love is, or you could never exiſt without your faithful Melville. I traverſe my chamber with haſty ſteps, and wring my hands in agony of grief; nay, even the preſence of my uncle cannot command tranquility. He aſks the reaſon of my perturbation. I am ready to forego all his wealth and affection, and exclaim 'tis the abſence of my angelic wife, miſtreſs, friend, every

every name that is dear and valuable. When you read of my miſery—my diſtreſs—can you be calm? Will you not fly to me, my darling Adelaide? Oh! haſte hither; let us run the hazard of Mr. Ancram's anger and deſertion—be ſatisfied with a moderate fortune—rather than be thus miſerable. Write to me immediately, let me know my doom, whether it is to be life or death: I have told you I can't live without you. Do you hate your Melville, who adores you? Obſerve, I intreat as a lover, and uſe no authority as a huſband; for 'tis to love alone I would owe your obedience.—Thou all-enchanting Adelaide, adieu!

Miſs BELMONT *to Marquis of* MELVILLE.

Montpelier.

I Muſt indeed, my dear Melville, be dead to all ſenſibility, and a proper inhabitant for the frigid zone, did I not return you gratitude and love for thoſe ſenſations you ſo feelingly deſcribe. If wiſhes could tranſport me to Nice, I would this moment put a period to your anxiety, and, like Pſyche, ſurrender myſelf to Zephyr to be conveyed to my huſband's preſence. But, alas! I am no Pagan, and the whole machinery of Homer's gods and goddeſſes cannot aſſiſt me. Yet the idea of my beloved Melville is ever with me. A regard for your intereſt prevented my accompanying you at firſt; but ſince it is your ardent deſire—ſince you will hazard the diſpleaſure

ſure of the fickle goddeſs Fortune for my ſake—be aſſured I will as ſoon as poſſible comply with your requeſt. A few days I intend to wait in hopes of meeting company, of which ſhould I be diſappointed, not to render you further unhappy, I will ſet out with only Annette and Jaques to attend me. In the mean time, my dear Melville, let me conjure you to be more compoſed, to be convinced by this letter of my unalterable eſteem and love, and to wait for my arrival (which ſhall be as ſoon as poſſible) with patience. Adieu!

Miſs BELMONT *to Miſs* MEYNEL,

(With the two foregoing Letters incloſed.)

Nice.

DOES not the place of date ſurpriſe you, my dear Harriot? It was for that purpoſe I poſtponed writing till I arrived here. The Marquis's letter (which I ſend you, with my anſwer) precluded all other fears but that of rendering him more unhappy, and, perhaps, plunging him from his great anxiety of mind into a fit of illneſs. Monſ. D'Oran, who is indefatigable in the ſervice of his friends, ran about three days to find out company for me to travel with; for I informed him and his lady with the ſecret whither I was going. They ſuſpect, I believe, how the Marquis and myſelf are ſituated. Monſ. D'Oran was ſucceſsful in his reſearches,

ſearches, and found an old man and woman, of limited circumſtances, whoſe reſidence is at this place, returning hither. They were happy in having company as well as myſelf, and promiſed to accommodate me and my ſervants at their houſe; of which I apprized my dear Melville by another letter, that he might not engage any other reſidence for me. We had a tolerable journey hither. You may gueſs with what joy the Marquis received me. Mr. Ancram is ſtill in a declining ſtate. Though I ſhut myſelf up as cloſe as I can, people know a ſtranger lives at Monſ. Bemont's, and call me "the Engliſh Recluſe." Thus am I ſituated at preſent. Write to me ſoon, my dear Harriot. Adieu!

From

From the Same to the Same.

Nice.

WHAT danger would await the woman whoſe real ſituation ſhould be that wherein I at preſent appear to be! How earneſtly do men endeavour ſtill further to betray into deeper ruin thoſe of our unfortunate ſex whom they ſuſpect to have already ſwerved from the path of virtue. It is an adopted maxim with them

" That thoſe who once have miſſed the right way
The further they do go the further they do ſtray;"
As thoſe who having paſſed dread Pluto's ſhore,
To life, to friends, to earth, return no more.

Too generally, I fear, my dear Harriot, a perſeverance in vice is the conſequence

quence of a deſertion of virtue; but there is no rule without exception. We have heard of many who by different modes have been ſeduced, and for a time loſt to virtue, but in whom its ray being rekindled, a future uniform conduct has erazed the remembrance of their crime from the memory of perſons poſſeſſing the ſentiments of candour, generoſity, and charity. But ſorry am I to ſay, I fear few are bleſſed with thoſe laudable ſentiments; for it is remarkable that our fellow-creatures failings and misfortunes live longer in remembrance than their good qualities; and this is likely to be the caſe till the diſſolution of this globe, becauſe, ſelf-love being too generally our predominant paſſion, we imagine fooliſhly, that in proportion as other peoples characters are blackened, our own is made to ſhine with the greater luſtre.

The Hon. Mr. Nugent is the cauſe of my reflection in the beginning of this letter, my dear Harriot. Having caſually drank tea two or three times in my company at Monſ. Bemont's, it ſeems he fancied there was ſomething deſirable in my perſon. This led him to obſervation. He found I lived in a private manner, and that the Marquis's viſits were very frequent; from whence he concluded that I muſt be Melville's miſtreſs. Full of this idea, he made it his buſineſs to find me alone, when with much explicitneſs and freedom he declared his paſſion, hinting that if I would deſert the Marquis, and attach myſelf to him, I ſhould find my account in it. Ah! my Harriot, to deſcribe the different emotions which ſeized me is impoſſible; but reſentment was ſo predominant over all, as ſcarcely to leave me the power of utterance.

terance. With the ſteadieſt tone I could command I expreſſed myſelf thus in return:—"You are unworthy any anſwer, Sir, yet I cannot help telling you that I am an Engliſhwoman of family, and have friends who may perhaps call you to account for this inſult.—Particular reaſons oblige me to remain here in private ſome time.—The Marquis is connected with my friends.—But why ſhould I account to you for my ſituation?—Was I poor and friendleſs, might I not be poſſeſſed of innocence and virtue?—Might I not be viſited by the Marquis without any improper connection ſubſiſting between us?——I inſiſt, Sir, not only that you offend me no more by language of this ſort, but that you avoid my preſence for the future."

"Well, Madam, ſaid he, bowing, I will

will leave you to conſider of it: but I hope my charmer will be leſs cruel when next we meet. Reflection, perhaps, may intereſt you in my favour."—So ſaying, he departed, and left me filled with cruel ſenſations. Such are the conſequences of private marriages. But I was not long left to my diſagreeable reverie. Melville came, who by his kindneſs and affection allayed the ſtorm in my breaſt which the infamous Nugent had raiſed. I dared not inform him of what had paſſed, leſt he ſhould be excited by his natural warmth of temper to call him to an account for it, the event of which might have been fatal.

A few days after I received a letter from my Honourable lover, which I returned unopened. Thus the matter remains at preſent.

Ah!

Ah! my friend, when ſhall I ſee thee? when ſhall I return to England?—when ſhall I be proclaimed a wife to the world, and be rendered leſs liable to future inſult?—When theſe things are fulfilled, and not before, ſhall I be

Your truly happy

ADELAIDE.

From the Same to the Same.

Nice.

MR. Ancram has kept his chamber ever ſince he has been here, and is now extremely ill. Nothing but his cloſe confinement could have prevented his hearing of my being at this place, where my name is well known. Annette tells me people are very inquiſitive, queſtioning her and Jaques much about

me, but they do not ſatisfy their curioſity. I much doubt whether they ſay the truth. I fancy they gratify the enquirers as far as they are able. Servants, and common people in general, love to make themſelves of conſequence, which they think they do when they have it in their power to anſwer ſuch ſort of queſtions. The Marquis has cautioned all his ſervants not to inform Mr. Ancram of my being here, and the phyſicians likewiſe, who pronounce that all their art cannot ſave their patient from death one week longer. Poor man! if his appointed period is arrived, may the Almighty grant him ſupport in his laſt agonies, and his ſoul find an eaſy ſeparation from the maſs of clay which now encumbers it! How awful is death, even to thoſe who have paſſed their days in virtue; but how dreadful, how

inſupportably

inſupportably dreadful, muſt it be to the wicked!

I have received a letter from Madame D'Oran, who informs me, that, juſt before ſhe ſat down to write, ſhe was ſurprized with a viſit from Mademoiſelle Albe, whom we all imagined to be at Paris. The young lady, ſhe ſays, ſtill talks of going thither, but buſineſs has hitherto witheld her. She enquired much after me, it ſeems, and was very anxious to know where I was gone; but Madame D'Oran did not ſatisfy her curioſity.

The amiable Madame Hermond is gone with her huſband to Amiens. Some of his relations reſide there. They intend to remain there ſome months.

Incloſed in my friend's letter was one from my aunt, which arrived at Montpelier ſince my departure. She upbraids me much with my long ſilence, and abſence from her—wonders how I can like to live in a ſtrange country, ſo far diſtant from my relations, running the hazard of loſing my reputation for want of a protector—ſays that I ſhall find a very affectionate friend in her, for her departed ſiſter's ſake—and aſks, ſince I have received no ſupply from my uncle, how I can therefore ſubſiſt? She concludes her very kind epiſtle with intreating an immediate anſwer.

Her concern for me, indeed, deſerves one; but I muſt wait a few days to ſee the event of Dr. ——'s prognoſtication. Should it prove true, I ſhall have it in my power to remove all her fears, and gladden

den her heart, by a communication of my marriage to her, for ſhe doats on grandeur, and will be proud to hear her niece is a Marchioneſs. Oh, what folly! grandeur and riches are far from conſtituting happineſs. But I muſt think of concluding—yet cannot without firſt informing you that Nugent is become exceedingly troubleſome and importunate; he peſters me with letters innumerable, which I order the ſervants not to receive, but he contrives to ſend them by different people, and gets them directed by various hands, ſo that I am often deceived, and open them. They contain propoſals which I ſhould ſhudder to liſten to. All the contempt or revenge I can ſhew him is to return them in a blank cover. I hope ſoon he will know me in my proper character, which ſurely will cauſe him to diſcontinue his impertinences,

nences. I am ſometimes, my dear Harriot, much alarmed at his perſiſting in his inſolence, fearing dreadful conſequences, ſhould it come to the knowledge of Melville, whoſe impetuous temper would not brook the leaſt inſult to his wife. You may gueſs how miſerable I am when this ſuggeſtion ariſes; but the flatterer, Hope, ſteps in to my aid, and I am calm again. Adieu! my beloved friend.

From the Same to the Same.

Nice.

"It is better to go to the houſe of mourning than to the houſe of feaſting, for the living will take it to his heart."

THE text prepares you for the event, my dear Harriot. Mr. Ancram is no more. Notwithſtanding I reap great

great advantage from his death, and he was ſo little known to me, I cannot help being much affected. Perhaps it proceeds from viewing his dead remains. There is ſomething paſt deſcription ſolemn in the chamber of death: the Preacher wiſely remarks, "the living will take it to his heart." We cannot well behold a maſs of clay, once in a ſtate of animation like ourſelves, without being ſtruck with the reflection, that it is a change we ourſelves muſt undergo, and we know not how ſoon: unexpectedly, perhaps, in the midſt of all our errors and imperfections. How incumbent a duty is it, therefore, my dear friend, for us frequently to contemplate and prepare for this diſſolution! When the ſpiritual eſſence quits its earthly tabernacle, how ghaſtly the corſe that is left behind! What a fit ſubject

of contemplation it is to curb the vanity, pride, and variety of paſſions, to which by nature we are ſubject, and which too frequently triumph over the beſt of us. The moſt innocent is not free from guilt——

I was interrupted by the Marquis, who, having overlooked what I had written, laughed at my ſermon, as he was pleaſed to term it. Alas! my dear Harriot, he is, what is too common in theſe days, a *free-thinker.* It would be in vain for me to endeavour to change his principles. I have for ſome time lamented his infidelity. Had my dear father lived, perhaps his powerful arguments might have had ſome influence over him, but I have no hope of ſucceeding. The puniſhment of evil is an article

article which Melville admits not into his creed. He told me, on this occaſion, that it is inconſiſtent with the goodneſs and juſtice of the God who formed us.

"Why ſhould it be inconſiſtent, returned I; has he not pointed out to us the road to happineſs, and implanted in our breaſts a monitor, which we call conſcience, to denote to us our deviation from right, and diſtinguiſh as clearly between virtue and vice, as ſenſe does between pleaſure and pain? and if to this we add the unequal diſtribution of good and evil in this life"——

"Stop, my deareſt Adelaide, interrupted he; my principles are too firmly rooted ever to be ſhaken: yours, undoubtedly, are the ſame.—It is the only ſubject upon which we can diſagree; let us, therefore, never reſume it."

He ſpoke haſtily, and rather in diſpleaſure.—It affected me, and ſome involuntary tears eſcaped.

"My angelic creature, ſaid he, catching me in his arms, forgive me.—I love you, I adore you.—What more can you deſire?"

It was neceſſary to ſubmit, my dear Harriot. I returned him thanks for his kind and tender affection, and have never ſince dared to ſpeak on the ſubject.

Immediately on Mr. Ancram's death I wrote to Lady N——, informing her of every particular concerning my marriage, and apologizing for having concealed it, by aſſuring her it was by the Marquis's deſire. He alſo wrote in confirmation of what I had ſaid. We both likewiſe

likewiſe wrote to my uncle Walters, deſiring the anſwers might be directed to Montpelier, whither we are going as ſoon as poſſible.

Monſ. Bemont informs me, that Nugent, now convinced of my quality and virtue, is ſo heartily aſhamed of his paſt conduct, that he dares not appear abroad, leſt he ſhould ſee me, and declares he could not even ſummon reſolution to aſk my pardon. Poor wretch! I wiſh it may deter him from ſimilar attempts, eſpecially if he ſhould meet with any young creature in reality ſo circumſtanced as he imagined me to be.

I have now a number of attendants, and have removed my lodgings, that I may appear in character. What folly is there in parade? Happineſs does not

conſiſt in riches: they, indeed, certainly create reſpect; but the reſpect that awaits virtuous actions, independent of pomp or title, is moſt pleaſing to an ingenuous mind. I wiſh to return to England, that you, my amiable friend, may complete my felicity by your dear company; for, till you become a wife, you muſt conſtantly reſide with

Your truly affectionate

ADELAIDE MELVILLE.

Marchioneſs of MELVILLE *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Montpelier.

THE news of our marriage arrived here long before us. Monſ. D'Oran (to whom the Marquis had written) took care to circulate it; therefore we had

had a number of congratulations upon our arrival. Mademoiſelle Albe, it ſeems, was juſt ſetting off for Paris when the news arrived, and, willing to be ſatisfied of the truth before ſhe departed, ran to Madame D'Oran, who aſſured her of it; whereupon ſhe flew into a great rage, abuſed the Marquis and me, threatened revenge ſooner or later, and vented the bittereſt curſes againſt us.

I forgot to inform you that an anonymous letter, directed to Mr. Ancram, arrived the day after his death, which Melville opened. It was full of ſevere reflections, and adviſed Mr. Ancram to beware that his nephew was not enſnared into a marriage with Miſs Belmont, who had followed him to Nice, &c. &c.

As it fortunately came too late to have its

its intended effect, we threw it into the fire without taking very particular notice of it, but now imagine it muſt have been ſent by the malicious Mademoiſelle Albe.

Of what avail are her furious imprecations? She cannot gain the Marquis's affection, or diſunite us. Poor unhappy woman, her anger recoils upon and puniſhes herſelf.

I have heard from Lady N——, my dear friend. According to my expectation ſhe is rejoiced beyond expreſſion at the news of my marriage, and informs me ſhe has adviſed the Duke of ——— and all our relations of it. The Earl of Walters is at Paris, but ſhe has furthered our letters to him.

Melville

Melville is determined to ſtay here a fortnight longer, that we may enjoy more of Monſ. and Madame D'Oran's company, who have been our very kind friends: after which we are to go to Paris, to view that celebrated city, before we return to England. The Marquis obligingly does it to gratify my curioſity, as he heard me expreſs a deſire of ſeeing it. I daily find myſelf, my dear Harriot, under more obligation to this affectionate huſband. How frequently do I wiſh my dear father was but alive to behold the happineſs he compelled me to accept, for you know the Marquis was not my own choice. Yet I ſometimes lament his natural warmth of temper, which often cauſes unhappineſs to himſelf, and terrifies me: but there is no pleaſure in this world without ſome alloy; therefore I ought

to

to be, nay, am, ſatisfied with the ſtate in which Providence has placed me, and the bleſſings bountifully beſtowed upon me. Indeed, I indulge the hope, that, as Melville is endowed with a great ſhare of ſenſe, he will make uſe of it to get the better of his haſty diſpoſition, which (as I ſaid before) frequently occaſions an interruption to his own, and, conſequently, my felicity. Adieu! You ſhall hear from me again as ſoon as I arrive at Paris; till when, and always, I ſhall be

Your aſſured friend,

ADELAIDE MELVILLE.

From

From the Same to the Same.

Paris.

AFTER having been ſo long abſent from London, this great city appears a new world to me; but I prefer the former in a high degree. This partiality, perhaps, ariſes from its being the place of my nativity; a circumſtance which generally attracts one to a particular ſpot: nevertheleſs, to ſpeak with all candour, London, in my opinion, has many advantages over this dirty metropolis.

From the Earl of Walters' banker we gained intelligence where he reſided, and ſent to inform him of our arrival. He was ſo very kind as to wait on us immediately, and is ſo much pleaſed with the Marquis, that he is ſeldom from our

our company. He has introduced us to his friends, ſo that I have ſcarce a moment I can call my own but that I take repoſe in. Lady Walters is likewiſe very obliging. They are deſirous, moreover, of introducing us at Court; but, as Mr. Ancram's death is ſo recent, the Marquis declines that honour, eſpecially as he thinks it will be more proper for us firſt to attend the Court of our own Monarch.

The Marquis intends our preſent ſtay ſhall be ſhort; but next year we propoſe to make ſome months abode at this city. You will not be ſurprized to hear I admire their operas here, as you know I am ſo doatingly fond of muſic. But I am greatly diſpleaſed with the French gallantry to married women. I have diſputed on the ſubject with ſeveral ladies, natives of this place. They ſhrug up their

their ſhoulders, and exclaim, "Ah! charmante Madame Melville, was you but to reſide here one year, we are ſure you would acquire ſo much *eſprit* as to be convinced of the propriety of our manners. Are we not formed for adoration? Is not the love of admiration innate? Becauſe we are told we are lovely, muſt we neceſſarily part with our virtue? No, no, Madame; 'tis nothing but paſtime. We liſten with pleaſure to find ourſelves worthy notice—Our huſbands approve it, becauſe it applauds their choice and taſte. We have few real lovers, but numberleſs pretenders—Mere bagatelle!——Ah! Madame, we have in reality as many virtuous women here as you have in England, but from our *gaieté de cœur* many are thought to be engaged in *une petite affaire*, who are as free from crim. con. as an infant; and,

and, *en verite, Madame, cela eſt toute.* You Engliſh ladies are for the moſt part prudes; but, pardon our obſervation, prudes are not always virtuous."

Theſe, my dear Harriot, were the general anſwers I always received: to which I returned, that I could never be perſuaded there was not a very great indelicacy in the conduct of the French ladies, let them be ever ſo virtuous; but further arguments on both ſides were to no purpoſe, each party being very tenacious of opinion.

The Marquis is going to the opera to-night without me, as, Lady Walters being indiſpoſed, I have promiſed to ſit with her. It is high time for me to attend; ſo, my Harriot, I muſt bid you adieu for the preſent.

ADELAIDE MELVILLE.

From the Same to the Same.

Paris.

I HAVE been for ſome time ſilent, my dear Harriot, in hopes that a cloud of uneaſineſs, which has ſince my laſt ariſen, would diſſipate; but I can no longer forbear unburthening myſelf to you by diſcloſing the ſubject of my trouble, which (unexpected as it may be) is no other than the Marquis's loſs of affection for me. Ah! my Harriot, he is ſtrangely altered within this month. His tenderneſs is all fled. He avoids my preſence, and alſo that of Lord and Lady Walters, who gently reproach him for this conduct. The firſt two or three evenings of his deſerting our company, I very innocently, and without meaning to offend, aſked what had occaſioned his abſence.

abſence. He flew into a violent rage directly, telling me I was become a *wife* indeed, but he would ſhew himſelf a *huſband* too, and threatened me at the peril of his everlaſting diſpleaſure ever to queſtion him again. You may be certain I have ſubmitted.

Ah! Harriot, when a huſband or wife has reſerves, adieu to all happineſs. When at home, Melville ſcarce ſpeaks to me; nay, within theſe three days, he ſeems to behold me with diſguſt. Some Frenchwoman, I fear, has captivated him, and I am doomed to experience a too common fate, that of a deſerted wife. What is to be done? Nothing. There is nothing I can have recourſe to but patience and hope, thoſe balms and comforts of the diſtreſſed. Let me endeavour to conſole myſelf with the latter,

ter, imagining that time may reſtore to me the Marquis's affection. Expoſtulations or reproaches would only irritate, and drive him from me for ever. I muſt perſevere in appearing blind to his change of behaviour; and if that conduct will not regain him, nothing will. A huſband is a petty tyrant, and ill brooks to have his ways ſcrutinized—A wife muſt be (like an enſlaved ſubject) ſubmiſſive and obedient; a dupe to his will, and blind to his infidelities.

What a ſad gloomy picture have I drawn of matrimony, my dear friend. Alas! I fear 'tis too generally the caſe. Men are too much given to inconſtancy. Nevertheleſs, it is not to be denied, nay, I will maintain, that when two rational people are united by love founded on eſteem, and uſe reciprocal endeavours

to

to pleaſe each other, it may be a ſtate of the greateſt felicity we can be bleſſed with in this world. That this may be your fate, my dear friend, is the very ſincere wiſh of your

ADELAIDE MELVILLE.

From the Same to the Same.

Paris.

THE Count de St. Lou is foremoſt amongſt the herd of fops who would fain entertain me with witticiſms and commendations of accompliſhments I am not poſſeſſed of. He is more importunate and troubleſome than the reſt, and unavoidably compels me to hear him. It is in vain I tell him that I am a gloomy Engliſhwoman, and, from a natural partiality to the manners of my country,

country, cannot think of French gallantry but with horror, accounting it criminal beyond any plea of excuſe in married perſons. He ſtill perſeveres in it notwithſtanding: and, to add to my uneaſineſs, the Marquis, I am ſenſible, perceives it, yet, inſtead of being diſpleaſed, ſeems to further St. Lou's opportunities by leaving us together, if the Count happens to come in when he is at home.

Oh! Melville, Melville, is it not enough to deprive me of thy love!—Would'ſt thou have me diſgrace both thee and myſelf by placing my affection on another? Perhaps thou thinkeſt it would palliate thy unkindneſs. Cruel man! thou knoweſt me not,——thou woundeſt my heart more than thou doſt imagine.

I have given ſtrict orders that the Count ſhould never be admitted when I am alone; but he frequently comes to breakfaſt with the Marquis, who ſoon after, like a French huſband, retires.

It is to no purpoſe to complain to any one here. When I acquaint my uncle and aunt with my averſion to the Count St. Lou's behaviour, they ſeem diſpleaſed, and call me prudiſh, for being offended at his agreeable gallant manner, as they term it; adding, that it is proper to coincide a little with the manners of a country one happens to be in—that the Count means no affront—nothing but *pour paſſer le tems.*

Very fine, indeed! Little did I expect ſuch near relations to ſpirit me up to intrigue. What a world do we live in,

in, Harriot! I fear it is too juſt a remark, that the frequent trips of our nobility to this gay city, where they imbibe a taſte for French manners, prove the ſource of the divorces now ſo common in England; for Engliſh huſbands in general, not being naturally of ſo volatile a turn as the French, cannot, whatever gallantry they themſelves engage in, be poltroons enough to connive at their wives intriguing, but ſue for a ſeparation as the beſt means of avenging their injured honour.

The Marquis ſays nothing of going to London, and I dare not interrogate him concerning it; ſo God only knows when we ſhall leave this place. He frequently comes in to dreſs juſt before dinner—ſighs bitterly—throws himſelf down on the couch—and in leſs than two minutes

haſtily jumps off it, and walks acroſs the room as if inſenſible of what he did. He no longer has any confidence in me. We ſeem ſeparate beings, indeed. I have the unhappineſs to find that a violent paſſion cannot be durable. His was too raging to laſt. The preſent object of his attention will ſoon, like me, become neglected. Melville, poor man! is his own tormentor. But reflections are vain. It is time to cloſe my letter. Adieu!

From the Same to the Same.

Paris.

THE Count de St. Lou continuing to perſecute me with his inſolent paſſion, I forbad him my houſe. He behaves with ſuch art and moderation before Lord

Lord and Lady Walters, that they blame me much for treating him ſo harſhly, alleging that it is only accuſtomary civility he pays me, and that, ſince my huſband will not now attend me himſelf to public places, a gallant is very neceſſary, eſpecially ſo reſpectable a one.

I would willingly excuſe my noble relations. The Count moſt certainly does not expreſs himſelf with ſuch warmth in their preſence; and, as they have ſpent ſo much of their life in France, they are reconciled to the foibles of the country; but, in my own opinion, a married woman of the leaſt delicacy muſt be ſhocked at a man's continually repeating to her, "that he lives but in her ſmiles—that in her abſence there ſeems a void in all nature—that he adores her, and hopes her heart will beat in uniſon with his,

and her huſband be no longer the object of her fond paſſion," &c. &c. A woman who can patiently liſten to ſuch flattery, forgetting all laws both human and divine, muſt have an unlimited ſhare of vanity, which will in all probability render her an eaſy prey to her ſeducer.

When I expreſs myſelf to Lady Walters and others in this manner, they tell me I judge too rigidly, and have little idea of the force and power of love, which, while it ſtimulates its votaries to the eager purſuit of the object of their affection, blinds them as to the propriety of the means of attainment.—Then may I ever continue free from it, ſay I, if it ſo intoxicates the ſenſes!

But why do I dwell ſo long on this ſubject? Let me ſpeak of my Melville—

Mine!

Mine!—No, Harriot,—he is loſt to me, I fear, for ever.

Yeſterday, as he was walking up and down the room with a wild ſtep, I ſat down on the window with a book in my hand, ſeemingly intent on it. He with apparent diſtraction ſtruck his hand croſs his forehead, and uttered to himſelf, "Angelic Violetta!——Tortures to my bleeding heart!—I have undone myſelf!—am married!—Never can be thine."

I was ſo overpowered with what I heard, that the book fell out of my hand, my head reclined againſt the window, and tears began to flow.

The noiſe of the book falling, and my ſobs, rouzed the Marquis from his reverie. Not being quite loſt to huma-

nity, "Adelaide, ſaid he, in a kinder tone than of late he has uſed to me, what is the matter with you? you look pale."——

Fearing his anger, I knew not what to anſwer.—It was neceſſary to ſpeak.—At laſt, I ſaid, the loſs of your eſteem, my Lord, is inſupportable to me!——Alas! you no longer love me, and I muſt be miſerable.

"I will not diſſemble, Adelaide; I adore another. Perhaps——but you are too much affected at preſent, dry up your tears——there may be means of making us both happy.——I will unfold my meaning another opportunity. Adieu! Lady Melville; compoſe yourſelf, and endeavour to hate me."

"Endeavour

"Endeavour to hate him!" Oh, Harriot, what ſtrange advice from a huſband! I made powerful endeavours to love him, having, as I acquainted you, married him even with reluctance, in obedience to my father's command. His extreme tenderneſs made me ſtrive to be grateful; duty urged me on to return his affection, which was then violent. After all the pains I have taken to eſteem him, behold the reward! I muſt now, by his own deſire, undo all I have done, and return to the indifference with which I firſt received him. Cruel command! ungrateful Melville!—To keep up appearances, I go into company as uſual; but, to a heart ſo ill-diſpoſed for the gaiety of this city as mine is at preſent, this taſk is very painful. Adieu! my Harriot.

From the Same to the Same.

Paris.

THE Marquis has unfolded the propoſal he intimated.—Shocking beyond meaſure!——But let me, if poſſible, communicate it in his own words.

Two mornings ago he addreſſed me as follows: "Adelaide, from the regard I find you have for me, and the nobleneſs of ſoul I have obſerved in you, I flatter myſelf you will pay attention to my requeſt, and gratify it.——I adore another; therefore you and I can never again live together on tolerable terms.—I am miſerable that I have it not in my power to offer my hand to the charmer who now engroſſes my attention, ſince her virtue will not admit of her gratifying

ing my paſſion without the matrimonial ceremony's taking place. You have it in your power, Lady Melville, to make me happy."

"Impoſſible! my Lord. How can I further your happineſs but by diſhonourable means?

"Renounce me, Adelaide; you know our marriage, being a private one, cannot be proved—Acknowledge with me our cohabitation was only an illicit amour, and I will ſettle on you whatever annual ſtipend you can demand within reaſon. The Count de St. Lou will re-eſtabliſh your reputation by marrying you, as from the violence of his paſſion he will overlook your ſuppoſed miſconduct, eſpecially as you are of ſo noble a family. By complying, you have a proſpect of

happineſs; by not complying, certain miſery."

For ſome time aſtoniſhment deprived me of ſpeech, my dear Harriot.—Good Heaven! avow myſelf a proſtitute to gratify his unruly paſſion!

As ſoon as I had a little recovered the uſe of my tongue, I aſked him from what circumſtance of my conduct it could ever enter his thoughts that I ſhould be capable of complying with ſuch an infamous deſire?

He flew into a rage, and vowed he would be the death of me if I dared impart to any one what had paſſed between us. I have not ſeen him ſince, nor any viſitor but Lady Walters, to whom I alleged a ſevere head-ach as an excuſe

for

for ſtaying at home alone. I am diſtreſſed exceedingly.——

❁ ❁

Lady Walters was my interruption. She came to intreat me to appear in public again, as it was rumoured that a fit of jealouſy confined me, which would render me an object of ridicule. She ſaid, was it really the caſe, ſhe ſhould be ſorry for me, but that generally ſuch ſort of fancy was ſoon diſpelled; and, as we ſhould be going to England ſoon, ſhe hoped the Marquis would baniſh from his heart Signora Guadicci.

"Who is this Signora Guadicci, Madam?" returned I, (being ignorant who his preſent idol was).

"Indeed, Lady Melville, I know nothing

thing of her, anſwered ſhe, but that ſhe is a rich Italian widow, whom the world ſays the Marquis at preſent ſighs for.—Theſe things are ſo common, my dear niece, that I hope you will take my advice, and not make yourſelf unhappy at what cannot at preſent be remedied. Appear as uſual with me, and flatter yourſelf that time will reſtore Melville's love to you again."

I returned her thanks for her advice, and promiſed to ſpend the evening at her houſe.

The ſituation I am in reminds me of Mademoiſelle Albe. Her bitter wiſhes are in part come to paſs. I wonder whether ſhe really is in this city;—have reaſon to imagine not, as I have not ſeen her in any public place ſince my arrival here. Neither *her* art nor beauty could

make

make the Marquis inconſtant; how attractive, then, muſt this Violetta, or Signora Guadicci, be!

It is time for me to conclude, or I ſhall weary you with my complaints. Adieu!

From the Same to the Same.

Paris.

THE Marquis's behaviour alienates my affection from him. I ſhall, I believe, boaſt to you of my indifference. But, alas! it muſt neceſſarily be a work of time before I accompliſh it. I certainly cannot eſteem a man of ſuch looſe and wicked principles: yet there is ſomething in the character of huſband that claims attention, be he ever ſo abandoned. I cannot hate the Marquis,

as

as he enjoined me; but I endeavour not to make myſelf unhappy at his infidelity, which is all I ought to do.

I have ſeen the enchantreſs who has deprived me of my baſe huſband's heart. Lady Walters perſuaded me to attend her and ſome more company to the opera. We had not been long there before Melville entered an oppoſite box with his Violetta. He did not perceive us, as all his attention was fixed on her the whole time. He ſeemed to gaze at her with a ſilent rapture. I felt a violent emotion and trembling all over me, but endeavoured by all poſſible means to conceal it. Mr. Smith, an Engliſh gentleman of our party, who ſtood near me, obſerved my change of countenance, and took advantage of the firſt opportunity that preſented itſelf to ſtand and

intercept

intercept my view of the Marquis. He recited ſome droll events with great humour, at which it was almoſt impoſſible to help laughing, though I was ſo oppreſſed with ſorrow and agony of heart. I had before obſerved much humanity in this gentleman, and was now obliged by his kind intention, and ſtrove as much as poſſible to conquer my chagrin, for I was become an object of general attention. St. Lou ſeemed to think that by his gallantry he could make amends for the Marquis's unkindneſs, but it only tended to bring on a relapſe of grief, and I availed myſelf of Mr. Smith's interference to avoid him.

When the opera was over, Lady Walters inſiſted upon my ſupping at her houſe, there being a great deal of company expected. I was but ill diſpoſed for

for it, yet I conſented, in hopes of diverting my uneaſineſs of mind. Innocent amuſements are laudable: we ſhould endeavour to ſupport, without repining, the misfortunes which cannot be avoided. Retirement and indulgence of my grief could not bring back the Marquis's affection, and muſing and heightening it by unavailing complaints would have been little better than upbraiding the Supreme Diſpoſer of all Things, by whoſe permiſſion the affliction had come upon me.

When we arrived at Lady Walters', the company formed themſelves into ſmall parties. Mr. Smith happened to be ſeated next me. "Your fortitude is worthy admiration, amiable Lady Melville, ſaid he, and the Marquis's neglect and miſconduct unpardonable—But it is impoſſible it can be of long duration—

The

The artful Guadicci muſt yield your juſt right over him—He will ſoon perceive her defects, and your ſuperior merit. Excuſe the liberty I take in noticing his unworthy treatment of your Ladyſhip. I ſincerely wiſh you happineſs, Madam. My motives are diſintereſted. My heart is unalterably fixed on one of the moſt amiable of women; and were you and ſhe acquainted with each other, I am certain you would exchange friendſhips, as there is ſo great a ſimilarity in your ſentiments. But, alas! ſhe is far diſtant, and unfortunate," added he, ſighing, and pauſing:—after which he begged, that, if it was in his power to be in any reſpects ſerviceable to me, I would be frank enough to command him.

I returned him thanks for his obliging offer

offer and good wiſhes.—We were ſummoned to ſupper, and were ſeparated.

A melancholy is diffuſed over this gentleman's features; from whence I infer that the object of his wiſhes is not to be obtained.

You will, undoubtedly, my dear Harriot, wiſh for a deſcription of this Violetta, who is the cauſe of the injury done to me by the Marquis. How improper a perſon am I to gratify you in this point? Even in ordinary caſes, can a woman depict her rival in an amiable light? Yet, to ſatisfy you, I will do it as impartially as I am able. She has a dazzling complection, but is not regularly featured—Her eyes are brilliant, and their fire denotes a tyrannic diſpoſition.——I can ſay no more of her, my dear

dear friend. I am low-ſpirited, and unfit for writing. Adieu!

From the Same to the Same.

Paris.

LORD and Lady Walters are going to England; and the Marquis, who, I believe, deteſts the ſight of me, has given orders to me to attend them. He ſays he will follow ſoon. In the mean time, I am to hire a houſe proper for us to reſide in. He ſpoke in a peremptory manner, therefore I muſt comply, and leave the exulting Violetta in quiet poſſeſſion of his company.

Ah! Harriot, my friend and comforter, unluckily fled from London. Oh! that you had not followed your aunt

aunt to Ireland!—Yet——Alas! I am ſick at heart—my ſoul is depreſſed beyond conception. You ſhall hear from me again when I arrive at London. Adieu!

ANNETTE, *the Marchioneſs of* MELVILLE'S *Woman, to Miſs* MEYNEL.

MADAM, *Paris.*

MY Lady has been ill, very ill, indeed. She had a violent fever, which ſhe bids me tell you in the beſt manner I am able, as ſhe is ſtill too weak to write herſelf. The Doctors ſaid ſhe would die of this inflaming fever, but my Lady Walters told me privately the Doctors of this country were ignorant fools. To be ſure ſhe is in the right. My Lord Marquis uſed to walk in and

out

out twenty times a day, and aſk if her Ladyſhip was alive, but I from my heart believe he wiſhed to ſee the end of her. Poor lady! Every body ſays his unkindneſs made her ſo bad. And I have ſomething to tell you, Madam; but I beg you will not mention it, for my Lady knows nothing of it. You muſt know a Mr. Smith and my Lord had liked to have killed each other. My maſter was walking in the Thuilleries with ſome Snora Guacchi, and Mr. Smith meeting them told my maſter a great deal about his ill-treatment of my Lady, and rated the Snora much about her wicked conduct; upon which the Marquis drew his ſword, and I don't know how it was, but, however, they was parted—the lady pretended to faint—and ſo it ended. I am very glad to tell you, Madam, that my Lady is ſo much better, and has been

out

out once in a carriage, and ſhe will write ſoon herſelf. So I have diſcharged my duty. Hoping you will excuſe this ſcrawl, I remain,

Madam,

Your faithful

and obedient humble ſervant,

ANNETTE LACHAM.

Marchioneſs of MELVILLE *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Paris.

I Ordered Annette, my dear Harriot, to inform you of my illneſs, and recovery, that you might not wonder at my long ſilence. The day I wrote laſt to you I was ſeized with a violent fever, occaſioned, I believe, by the uneaſineſs

of

of mind I had endeavoured ſo long to conceal: but I will ſpeak no more of it, turning my thoughts to a pleaſanter ſubject—The Marquis is kinder to me, my Harriot, and will accompany us to London in a few days. We are to be at my uncle Walters' till we ſettle in a houſe of our own; and then I hope, my amiable friend, to have your dear company. The Marquis will, perhaps, forget Violetta, and I ſhall be again at peace. Should, however, further trouble await me, I truſt my confidence will reſt unſhaken in the goodneſs of Providence, whoſe diſpenſations, though ſometimes ſeemingly ſevere, being founded in infinite wiſdom, claim, therefore, the implicit and chearful acquieſcence of fallible mortals.

I met the Count de St. Lou yeſterday

morning at the Counteſs de B——'s. He very gallantly congratulated me on my recovery, and whiſpered ſomething about unhappineſs at not being ſo well received by me as Mr. Smith was—that he ſhould be happy to protect me—and ſome incoherent ſtuff I could make nothing of: therefore deſired him to be ſilent.

I beg you to put an end to all your uneaſineſs concerning me, my deareſt friend, as I am perfectly recovered.

Lady N—— is ſtill at Laurel-Grove, my Lord being confined by a fit of the gout; ſo that I ſhall not have the pleaſure of ſeeing them ſome time; but I hear from her often. Adieu! my dear Harriot; I am going to a concert at the Counteſs de B——'s.

I cannot diſpatch my letter without informing you I have been exceedingly entertained. The Counteſs de B—— has a great fund of wit and humour, which ſhe diſplayed to-night to the utter confuſion of Monſ. Vilmar, a coxcomb who is ſo exceſſively conceited of his own charms, that he thinks no woman can reſiſt them. It ſeems he took it into his head to inform Mademoiſelle Salens (a very amiable young lady, and a friend of the Counteſs's) that he did her the honour to admire her. She was ready to laugh in his face, and with a mixture of indifference and diſdain, ſtanding with her hands folded, ſhe anſwered, "No, never." To mortify his unbounded vanity the Counteſs compoſed a ſong on the occaſion, and ſet it to a ludicrous tune. Monſ. Vilmar came to the concert, angry with the young lady for over-

looking his imaginary qualifications, inſomuch that he affected to take no notice of her. But judge of his chagrin when the Counteſs, coming to ſing, with the greateſt humour performed the ſong ſhe had prepared for Monſ. Vilmar's reception, the words of which were as follow:

NYMPH divine, liſten,
Oh! liſten to my voice,
Nor let me ſue in vain,
But on me fix your choice.
She. No, never!

Never, Goddeſs bright,
Is too long a date;
Do not thus oppreſs
One you do not hate.
She. Yes, ever!

(Sung in anger.)

Haughty Nymph, then know
Thee I can deſpiſe;
A time may come that thou
May'ſt ſigh for theſe bright eyes.
She. No, never!

Senſeleſs

Senſeleſs Nymph, adieu!
In ſpite of all thy art,
Thy ſpells, thy charms, are vain,
I'm maſter of my heart.
She with diſdain, laughing,
Poor ſwain, adieu!'

The lady's reſponſes were ſung in the manner of Ariel's echo to Ferdinand in the Tempeſt, and had a very droll effect. A general mirth enſued, and Monſ. Vilmar decamped in a great paſſion. But it is time for repoſe—three in the morning. Adieu!

From the Same to the Same.

London.

WE arrived here ſafe a fortnight ſince; but the Marquis has not yet met with a houſe to his liking. The Duke of ——— and all my relations have favoured

voured us with their company, and ſeem to approve Melville much: yet he was apparently confuſed, and received their compliments with a ſort of reluctance. Perhaps the conſciouſneſs of his ill-treatment of me at Paris was the reaſon of it. I fear he has not forgot Violetta. He is very polite to me before my friends, but cool and ſullen when alone. Indeed, I ought not to be ſurprized at it; a paſſion ſo violent as that he had for her cannot be ſuppreſſed inſtantaneouſly. I muſt wait with patience for the gradual return of his affection. Adieu! my dear Harriot; be aſſured you ſhall ſoon again hear from me; when I hope to ſend you a ſummons to come hither to a new habitation, which I wiſh we may ſpeedily meet with.

From

From the Same to the Same.

London.

IN what words ſhall I deſcribe my miſery?—Oh! I cannot——Horror, diſtraction, ſeizes me—A cold ſweat enſues—I am———

A fainting fit happily deprived me of ſenſation—I no longer felt my wretchedneſs. Why did I return to life? In vain I call on Death for relief; the ſpectre flies the wretched.

Baſe, inhuman, abandoned Melville! The ſtings of conſcience and remorſe will purſue thee even in the arms of Violetta, on whoſe account thou haſt thus barbarouſly treated me. Oh! Harriot,

I am ruined, undone—my reputation is loſt for ever.

The night that his cruel plot was put in execution, being exceeding ſleepy, I went to bed at twelve, and told Annette to retire, as I ſhould ſoon be aſleep. So it happened: but I was ſoon awaked to a new ſcene of woe. A violent altercation and noiſe rouzed me. I ſtarted up in bed, and found the curtains undrawn. Lord Walters, his gentleman, Melville, and his valet, ſtood at the feet of the bed, and Count de St. Lou in his ſhirt was endeavouring to diſengage himſelf from them. Amazed and terrified at the ſight, I demanded an explanation.

It is in vain to aſſert your innocence, ſaid my uncle: guilt is too plainly proved upon you. The Count was caught eſcaping

caping from your bed—thou vile proſtitute!—Diſgrace to thy family!——A fine effect this of prudery!—You, forſooth, could not endure common civilities from the Count; behold the contraſt—in England, too!

"If I knew the Count was in London, or have diſhonoured the Marquis's bed, may"———

Ceaſe your aſſeverations, Adelaide, ſaid Melville, and add not to your guilt by a denial. Then, turning to Lord Walters, with a ſoothing artful air, I am ſorry, my Lord, (ſaid he,) a woman related to ſo noble a family ſhould ſo far forget herſelf, and diſgrace her blood: but I muſt now inform you of a truth, which, if ſhe had continued faithful, I would ever have concealed—She is not my wife.

"Not your wife," echoed the Earl—while aſtoniſhment ſtruck me dumb.

She is not, my Lord, continued Melville, but willingly became my miſtreſs; after which, as a recompence for her ſeeming affection and conſtancy, and out of conſideration to her family, I permitted her to take my name: but now I diſcard her, and am free. I need not aſſert ſuch a thing, you are ſenſible, my Lord, if it was not fact, as I ſhould now have it in my power, was ſhe really my wife, to obtain a divorce.

Good Heaven! diſplay my innocence, exclaimed I in agony—Count St. Lou, will you ſay that I encouraged you to come hither?——

He ſhook his head, but anſwered nothing.

Oh!

Oh! Melville, tell me, cried I, in the name of all that is ſacred, have you ſuffered me to be polluted?—Am I really undone?——

"That is a ſtrange language, Madam, to make uſe of to me and the preſent company—You muſt know beſt the degree of your guilt.——But we have no further buſineſs here now—You are at liberty, Madam, to purſue your intrigues—I bid you adieu for ever."

Count St. Lou went; Lord Walters and his ſervant retired; the Marquis and his valet likewiſe: but Melville returned almoſt inſtantly, while I was in agonies unſpeakable.

Adelaide, whiſpered he, for your private ſatisfaction, I ſwear, in the moſt

ſolemn manner, that I leave you unpolluted. The Count was but juſt put into your chamber, when I arrived at it with Manville; your uncle followed. I loved another, and could not exiſt without her. Take my laſt advice; accept of St. Lou, he will marry you, and make you happier than I was capable of. I have left you virtuous. Adieu!

Annette, being 'waked by the confuſion and noiſe this affair cauſed in the houſe, came and found me in a ſtate of inſenſibility, juſt after the Marquis departed. She gave me ſome drops, and endeavoured to rouze me. I burſt into a flood of tears and laughed alternately, then ſunk into faintings. The good-natured girl lamented over me, and went to inform Lady Walters I was dying; who did not think proper to riſe, but

ſent

ſent for a phyſician. Being delirious, I fell into violent ravings before him, crying out, my huſband had cauſed me to be raviſhed—that Mr. Foſter's ghoſt would appear to aſſert my innocence—that Melville had run a penknife into my heart, which gave me great pain—with other incoherent expreſſions of horror and diſtreſs.

Doctor Opium told Annette that my diſorder ſeemed to proceed from affliction; on which ſhe, with her natural frankneſs, related what had happened. He ſhook his head, and ſaid he feared I had been hardly uſed—that he did not know what to make of the ſtory. He, however, ſent ſome medicines, which compoſed and relieved me by morning. Lady Walters then came, and enquired after my health; when, finding me better,

ter, ſhe ventured to ſpeak of the night-ſcene. I aſſured her I was innocent, but to no purpoſe; ſhe would not believe me, and inſiſted that I ſhould leave her houſe when I was recovered, ſince I had behaved in ſo obſtinate and ridiculous a manner; and, prepoſterous as it may ſeem, ſhe hinted, that, if I had really been married to the Marquis, my amour with St. Lou would not have been diſgraceful.

Two days after, I informed Lady N——, by letter, with the particulars of my unfortunate ſituation. The Marquis told me before the completion of his villainy, that he had accidentally deſtroyed the certificate of our marriage; but little did I ſuſpect his diabolical project. I begged Lady N—— to pity me, at leaſt not totally to condemn me, till the

the confirmation of my valuable friend Mr. Foſter's death ſhould put it out of my power to prove my marriage with the Marquis; for, if that could be proved, I hoped to find means, through the goodneſs of Providence, to clear up my innocence in regard to St. Lou.

Being of a more humane diſpoſition than Lady Walters, ſhe wrote to a Mrs. More, in B—— ſtreet, to receive me at her lodgings, till I had conſulted ſome eminent lawyer, to whom ſhe bid me apply, and give directions, if Mr. Foſter ſhould be living; after which I might come to Laurel-Grove: but ſhe did not chuſe it ſhould be known that ſhe countenanced me at preſent; on this account I muſt call myſelf Miſs Avelini, and paſs for an Italian, under which name ſhe had by letter recommended me to Mrs. More.

I was obliged, my dear Harriot, to lay aſide my pen, as I found my uſual faintneſs almoſt overpowering me. I have not yet recovered the ſhock of the laſt ſtroke upon my honour, though a whole month has ſince elapſed. I could not—dared not—write ſooner to you, as I had not ſtrength to go through the taſk of reciting my misfortunes. I continued a week at Lady Walters'; the Earl was ſo irritated, that he would not ſee me. I ſent Annette to moſt of my relations, to aſſure them of my innocence, and that the charge was a plot of the Marquis to get rid of me, as I could not prove my marriage. They all perſiſted in the ſame anſwer, that they believed me guilty, and would never again ſee me. Annette wept with me. To deſcribe the agonies I endured, and, indeed, at times, ſtill endure, is impoſſible.

I ſent

I ſent ſeveral letters to the Marquis, written in as affecting a manner as I could pen them; but he returned me verbal meſſages that he would have nothing more to ſay to me.

To heighten my affliction, one evening Annette came and informed me, a lady, who ſaid ſhe was an intimate friend of mine, deſired earneſtly to ſpeak to me. A ſmall ray of hope that it might be my Harriot gave me joy for a moment. I ordered Annette to bring her to me. She did, and retired.

I was exceedingly mortified at my diſappointment in ſeeing a ſtranger, but deſired her to be ſeated on a couch oppoſite to that whereon I was reclined.

"Do you not know me, Madam?" ſaid

ſaid ſhe, falling at my feet. Ah! Harriot, gueſs if you can my ſurprize and horror at diſcovering the pretended *ſhe* to be the Count de St. Lou.

"Wretch!"———I could utter no more—Surprize and terror ſtruck me dumb—I could not even call for relief.

My ſilence gave him an opportunity of telling me, that the violent paſſion he had for me prompted him to agree to the Marquis's requeſt, in hopes that I would at laſt yield to his wiſhes—that he adored me more than ever—pitied my preſent illneſs and diſtreſs—and that, ſooner than loſe me, though I had been Melville's miſtreſs, he would make me his wife, and reſcue my reputation from the aſperſions by which it was now obſcured.

I trem-

I trembled exceedingly, and with difficulty rung the bell.

Lady Walters entered with Annette.

It ſeems, Lady Walters' woman having informed her that a ſtranger was admitted into my apartment, her Ladyſhip had gone into the next room to liſten. She was gratified—She heard every thing.

Riſe, my Lord, ſaid ſhe, (he always had been a favourite of hers); the diſguiſe you have put on, and the ſentiments I have heard you avow, convince me of the ſincerity and ardency of your paſſion for my unhappy niece. Surely, Adelaide, you cannot refuſe to lend an ear to ſuch generous propoſals, and avoid being further diſgraceful to your friends, by obliterating your paſt miſconduct by a com-

a compliance with the Count's honourable deſires.

A few tears came ſeaſonably to my relief. Ah! Madam, anſwered I, would you have me incur the guilt of bigamy? —However the Marquis may diſown and condemn me, I am really his wife, and while he lives I never can become another's.

Upon this her Ladyſhip flew into a violent rage with me for ſo obſtinately perſiſting in that wicked aſſertion. The Count renewed his ſolicitations; and, my ſpirits being quite overpowered, I fainted.

When I returned to my ſenſes, I found myſelf accompanied by Annette only. In about an hour after, ſhe was ſent for by

by the Earl and his Lady, and brought back word that they would neither of them ever ſpeak to me more, except I would receive Count St. Lou's addreſſes, and regain my reputation by becoming his wife.

With Annette's aſſiſtance I repaired to their preſence, and, falling upon my knees, in the moſt ſolemn manner I aſſured them of my innocence, declaring I was married in my father's preſence.—But I might as well have ſpoken to the wind—they were immoveably fixed in the belief of my guilt, and inſiſted on my ſeeking an aſylum elſewhere as ſoon as my ſtrength would permit.

Cut to the heart with this inhuman treatment, Surely, my Lord, ſaid I, you will not permit your own brother's daugh-

ter

ter to become a vagabond—a ſuppliant to ſtrangers for a morſel of bread, to ſupport that life ſhe wiſhes at an end, but muſt not ſhorten.

Hence! ſaid the Earl, ſtamping his foot in a paſſion; you have other ſecret lovers to ſupply you—Dare not inſult me with your hypocritical cant, and pretence of virtue.

I retired almoſt in a ſtate of diſtraction to my chamber. Ah! Harriot, I have no comfort under this moſt grievous affliction but that derived from the poſſeſſion of a heart conſcious of integrity, and entirely clear of the accuſations urged againſt me.

I endeavoured to calm my mind; but I found that would be impoſſible while I remained

remained in that place of abode. In ſpite of my earneſt intreaties, Count St. Lou was forced into my company, with hopes that he would at laſt intereſt me in his favour.

As I was to go to Mrs. More's under a fictitious name, it was neceſſary to leave Earl Walters' privately, and without taking Annette with me; and therefore I ſeized an opportunity one evening, when almoſt all the family were out, to pack up my cloaths, and, ſtepping ſoftly to the door, called a hackney-coach (you know there is a ſtand in the ſtreet); then, having by the coachman's aſſiſtance ſecured my trunks in the coach, I unperceived ſtepped into it, and drove to Mrs. More's, who, having expected me ſome time, was prepared to receive me.

I left

I left in my apartment a letter for Lord and Lady Walters. I returned them thanks for paſt favours, and obſerved, that, ſince they would not be convinced of my innocence, and I was become ſo hateful to them, it was unneceſſary to inform them where I was gone. But I intreated Lady Walters, out of compaſſion to Annette, who was a good, faithful ſervant, to beſtow a character on her, and, if poſſible, get her a place, as I could not pretend to keep a maid longer, and in all probability ſhould be obliged to deſcend to ſervitude myſelf for ſubſiſtence.

I wrote to the poor girl likewiſe, to thank her for her affectionate care of me; encloſed her wages, and a ſmall preſent beſides.—Annette will ſtill continue in the ſtation ſhe has always been uſed

to;

to; whilſt I, perhaps, ſhall be degraded to——Hold, my troubled ſpirit; ſuppreſs the ſuggeſtions of deſpair.—Indeed, I am angry with myſelf for not ſubmitting to my ſufferings with more patience; as if I believed not, that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

Avoiding reflections on this ſad event as much as poſſible, I have recited every thing with all the brevity and preciſion in my power.

Letters are diſpatched to Leghorn, and to Mr. Foſter's relations in different parts; the anſwers to which will aſcertain my doom. If he really has periſhed, I ſhall be loſt for ever, unable as I ſhall then be to prove any thing againſt the inhuman Melville.

In the mean time I ſhall go to Laurel-Grove: Lady N———'s chaiſe will meet me at Hatfield. Remember my name is now Avelini: direct to me under that appellation at Lady N——'s houſe.

Reſignation under misfortunes like mine is not the eaſieſt of taſks. The maſk of diſſimulation is ſo artfully put on, and Vice ſo frequently impoſes upon the world in the diſguiſe of Virtue, that it is very difficult to diſcern the truly honeſt character, which often in diſtreſs fails to meet with its deſerved regard and ſupport. Happy are thoſe young females who have parents to protect them from the hand of violence and the tongue of calumny! May you, my ever amiable friend, never by a villain be deprived of reputation (that jewel which

to

to our ſex is ineſtimable), nor experience any other of the woes of

The wretched

ADELAIDE MELVILLE.

In Continuation, to Mrs. GORDON.

THE hiſtory of my misfortunes, Madam, is drawing to a period. I wrote a few letters to Miſs Meynel, from Laurel-Grove, which ſhe has miſlaid: they chiefly conſiſted, however, of unavailing complaints. It remains further to be related, that Lady N—— received from Lady Walters information of my flight, and (as it was termed) imprudent refuſal of the Count St. Lou, who was almoſt diſtracted at the loſs of me; and that Lady Walters had taken Annette into her ſervice.

In three months time letters arrived to compleat my miſery, informing that the veſſel in which Mr. Foſter ſailed was certainly wrecked, and every one on board periſhed. All his relations, too, confirmed it.

Lady N—— accuſed me of art and diſſimulation: it was very plain, ſhe ſaid, I knew of Mr. Foſter's death, and had had recourſe to an unwarranted uſe of his name to give probability to my ſtory: that I was too abandoned for her to protect me, and therefore I muſt quit her houſe, and return to my favourite mode of life. She would not permit me to ſpeak in my own defence.

Thus cruelly treated, my dear Madam, and thus ſituated, was I, when we met. You have endeavoured to procure me happineſs, and conducted me to a ſafe harbour.

harbour. I wiſh never to change my ſituation, as I am ſure I cannot meet with a better among ſtrangers.

You are now acquainted, my dear Mrs. Gordon, with the particulars of a ſtory much talked of in the *beau monde*, by whom I am accounted guilty. The Marquis is married to Violetta, and I find is bringing her to England. I think ſhe muſt have done violence to her conſcience, though no doubt the Marquis is principally the guilty perſon.

Ah! Mademoiſelle Albe, I ſhould now be an object of thy compaſſion, were we to meet—Thou wouldſt recal thy bitter wiſhes—wouldſt weep with me—for thy heart is not void of compaſſion!

But complaints are fruitleſs, my dear

Mrs. Gordon; nevertheleſs, I have confidence in Divine Providence, who, by your means, has conducted me to my preſent happy aſylum. Various are the evils of life, and, conſidering my years, of which the twentieth is not yet compleated, I think I have experienced many.

Adieu! Madam. Be aſſured your kindneſs and charity will ever be in my grateful remembrance, and I ſhall always remain your very affectionate

And obliged humble ſervant,

SILENA HOWARD.

From

Miſs HOWARD *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Elyſium-Place.

MR. Villars's benevolence and humanity make him almoſt adored by the poor peaſants here. He relieves their diſtreſſes, and makes life comfortable to them as far as he is able. Indeed, poor wretches, they ſtand in need of aſſiſtance. The hovels they inhabit are formed with clay, and in my opinion are fitter for dogs than the human ſpecies in this bleak country. Some of them are ſcattered on mountains, miles apart from each other, and in winter are attacked by tremendous blaſts, which would ſtrike with horror a being not accuſtomed to them. The poor women ſuffer inexpreſſible hardſhips, (it is our lot to ſuffer,) eſpecially in childbirth;—they put

themſelves under the care of the moſt ignorant and hard-hearted wretches, miſnamed midwives, who have no other method of bringing the poor child into the world, than almoſt ſhaking its unhappy mother out of it. They take the poor agonized creature by the legs, with her head hanging downward, and ſhake her unmercifully, till at laſt perhaps ſhe is happily deprived of ſenſation. Thus not a few are ſacrificed: many, however, through ſtrength of conſtitution, and the mercy of Providence, eſcape with life, and Nature at laſt works its way.

There are particular cuſtoms amongſt the plebeians of every country. When a couple are married here, they are attended, perhaps, by two or three hundred people; the men drop a ſhilling apiece, the women ſixpence, for the bride

and

and bridegroom to begin the cares of life with. They are regaled for it with bread and butter, milk, oat-bread, and ſometimes bread and ale.

What I have mentioned is the common food of this country. Uſe makes them contented and happy with it while bleſſed with health. Sickneſs and poverty are hard endurance every where. In general, from my own obſervation, and the ſuperior judgment of Mr. Villars, I muſt mark the Welſh as a lazy ſet of people—they are afflicted with what the phyſicians term *ſomnolentia continua*; you may perceive it even by their gait of walking. There is one county, indeed, whoſe inhabitants are naturally bleſſed with more penetration and vivacity than the others, for which reaſon they are

overlooked by theſe leaden mortals as children of folly. Genius is ever envied.

Mr. Villars tells me he has frequently obſerved, in theſe parts, that on evenings, in families where a number of ſervants are collected together, after the buſineſs of the day is compleated, inſtead of amuſing themſelves, they ſit in circles faſt aſleep; in the cottages the ſame. The harp will ſometimes allure them to the exerciſe of dancing; but in general Somnus reigns. Till within theſe few years moſt part of this country was as barren as Scotland; the natural indolence and ignorance of the farmers withheld them from cultivating their lands; but the landlords beginning to raiſe their rents, neceſſity rouzed them from their error, and they are now convinced that induſtry will perform miracles.

Mrs.

Mrs. Villars diſcovers nothing to contradict my former account of her: ſhe continues very friendly and kind to me, and laughs as uſual.

Mr. Shenkin's family often viſit us: Miſs talks much of a Lady Di Horton ſhe correſponds with, who is a great wit according to her report, and has promiſed to grace Shenkin-Hall with her preſence ſome time or other. She is a widow, I find.

Lord Clandon and Mr. Clairville come frequently alſo. The latter behaves to me with great reſpect; but his Lordſhip is too frequently making uſe of language not proper for me to attend to. I check his impertinence as much as poſſible by my ſevere looks, but he is not eaſily diſcountenanced. He has appa-

rently a ſerious deſign on Miſs Shenkin, or rather her fortune, but would prefer me for his miſtreſs I ſuppoſe. Mr. Villars ſays he is a great libertine. However, I am ſufficiently ſafe under the protection of my worthy friends, who would not admit him to their houſe, were they not ignorant of his behaviour to me.

Mr. Villars's ſpirits are exhilarated by the hopes of ſeeing his beloved nephew, Lord Villars, in a few days, who is repreſented as one of the moſt amiable young men exiſting, both in perſon and morals. He has been very unfortunate in marriage, his father (ſince dead) having compelled him to wed againſt his liking; but he is now releaſed from the bonds of matrimony by that too faſhionable method, a divorce. She was Lady

Mary

Mary T——, and, according to common report, a very abandoned woman. I hope, as he is ſo worthy a better fate, that, if he does venture upon marriage again, he may meet with a lady who will make him amends for the unhappineſs he experienced in his firſt connubial connection.

It gives me great pleaſure to contemplate the romantic beauties about this place. I feel a calm tranquility ſtealing on my mind, and hope ſoon, my dear Harriot, to be able to inform you, with truth, that I have forgot all my misfortunes in this peaceful retreat, in conducting me to which the mercy of Providence is manifeſt, and I hope I ſhall never ceaſe to adore it.

You gave me ſome intimation in your laſt

laſt concerning your going to a maſquerade. Inform me, I pray you, how you approved it. Revive me a little. I ſhall ſoon, I hope, be able to regain my uſual vivacity, which I have long had reaſon to baniſh. I now ſeem ſettled for life; and, to be quite happy, I have only to forget that I ever had any other friends than you and my kind benefactors here. Adieu!

Miſs MEYNEL *to Miſs* HOWARD.

Dublin.

"REVIVE you," Silena, who are happily got into Elyſium! what a requeſt! When you quitted Laurel-Grove, could you imagine you were about to make ſo agreeable an exchange! But, as you are a good girl, and tolerably contented,

contented, I will not chide: a truce, then, Silena, with further complaints. I am ſiſter to the ſage Pangloſs, and, folding my hands, cry, "Every thing is for the beſt:" it is not for us ſhort-ſighted mortals to arraign the diſpenſations of infinite wiſdom. You are a dear, good creature, I muſt confeſs, and miſtreſs of ſo much reſignation and patience, that it is actually injuſtice to accuſe you of want of it, even in raillery. Indulge mirth, my dear girl; laugh at the follies of the ruſtic 'ſquires around you—any thing to divert reflection: but I cannot adviſe you to be ſo very giddy as your Harriot; becauſe then, perhaps, you might juſtly incur cenſure.

You muſt, it ſeems, have an account of the maſquerade. Here it comes, then, Silena; though I'm afraid you'll think my deſcription inſipid:

Lady

Lady Bell M. was dreſſed in the character of Calypſo; her three ſiſters and ſome ladies as attendant nymphs; myſelf cloſe to her ſide as a girl of Patmos; Lord M— as Mercury; and ſome other gentlemen in various dreſſes.

After we had been at this ſcene of confuſion near an hour, I grew tired. Inſtead of wit, I heard nothing but "Do you know me?"—"I know you"—"A divine creature!" and ſuch ſtuff. As I was leaning on Lady Bell's arm, complaining of the dulneſs of the place, the fineſt figure I ever beheld entered, dreſſed as the Clown in the Twelfth Night. Coming up to us, "Fair maid," ſaid he, "will you anſwer a fool? You are arrived in a land of them——Tho' I have the honeſty openly to appear as one, yet, like other fools, I think myſelf a wiſe man—Self-conceit blinds the whole world—

world—We ſee not our own follies——To the old tune, then—Can you ſpeak our language?—Have you been long imported from Patmos?"

"Juſt long enough to wiſh myſelf back again," ſaid I, with a ſigh. "My hiſtory, good Mr. Fool, is as follows: a violent ſtorm which daſhed a veſſel to pieces againſt our ſhore, threw on land an Engliſhman, the only one who eſcaped with life. This Engliſhman pretended to love me, and, according to the manner of his countrymen, endeavoured by falſe oaths to enſnare me. My virtue being proof againſt his flattery, he took the firſt opportunity to eſcape, and cruelly left me. I prayed to Jupiter, intreating that he would permit me once more to behold the perfidious wretch, to upbraid him with the theft of my affection.

fection. My prayer was heard—Mercury inſtantly appeared, and conducted me through the air to this motley aſſembly, telling me at the ſame time that my own language had been conveyed from me into the third Heaven with Orlando's wits, and in its room was ſubſtituted the Engliſh one. I found my lover, and accuſed him—he fled; ſince which, having regained my liberty, I am impatiently expecting Mercury to reſtore me to my native home and language."

"Thanks, fair maid, for your explicitneſs. Will you accept the ſervice of a Fool while you"——

Lord B—— came up, ſaying, "Begone, Mr. Fool, you are not fit company for theſe fair maids."

He

He made a moſt graceful bow, and ſung in character, "I am gone, and anon, Sir," &c. then tripped away, while a large group was liſtening to and admiring him.

Lady Bell finding it very warm, we retired to a ſmall room to cool ourſelves.

"Who can this Clown be?" ſaid ſhe; "there is ſomething enchanting in his manner.—What a fine ſtory, too, you formed!"

While ſhe was ſpeaking, the Fool entered with a guittar—We were unmaſked—"Heavens!" cried he, and ſtarted. We clapped on our maſks haſtily again. "What now, good Mr. Fool?" ſaid her Ladyſhip. He anſwered not, but ſung to the guittar, "Come away, Death," &c. then tripped off as before.

Calypſo,

Calypſo, leaving two of her nymphs with me, returned to the aſſembly. The room we were in began to fill, and my chattering friends were laughing away with the Montagues, when a gentleman in a domino entered, whom by his very attractive air, Silena, I gueſſed to be my flirting ſwain, and was not miſtaken. Turning his back to the company, and addreſſing himſelf to me, "Fair maid," ſaid he, "I have now aſſumed a dreſs more ſuitable to my real character," and, drawing aſide his maſk, which concealed a beautiful face void of effeminacy, was proceeding, "I admire you beyond my power of expreſſion, and" ——"Hold," ſaid I, "you know I am prejudiced againſt all your countrymen—I include you with them—I will not accept your friendſhip—never again liſten to a ſtranger—Leave me, then, Sir, to my deſtiny." A murmur of "It certainly

tainly is he" was uttered by the Montagues—He ſtarted at the words, and exclaiming "Cruel fate!" he fled.

To confeſs the truth, I was vexed at his ſudden departure; but ſoon recollecting myſelf, "and who is he?" ſaid I.

"Why the gentleman in the character of Tancred, who followed the domino out of the room, is the Hon. Mr. V—, a moſt charming fellow!"

"Oh, hideous!" cried I, at my freſh diſappointment. Lady Bell ſoon after joined us; but, finding my ſwain had been frightened away, I grew weary, told her I was ſatisfied with the amuſement as ſhe called it, and was deſirous of retiring. Lord M— handed me to my chair, and home came your Harriot very ſafe.

Now

Now, was I one of your melting ſouls, I ſhould moſt undoubtedly have got an account to give you, that I had a ſleepleſs morning (night being paſt), and that the form of this enchanting unknown ſtill hovered in my ſight. To tell the truth, I ſlept well, but he was the firſt perſon I thought of when I 'waked. However, I ſhall drive him away from my memory. What! fall in love at firſt ſight!—Ridiculous!—Quite in the romance way, indeed.—A creature I may never ſee again, too.——Oh! it muſt not be. Adieu! Monſieur Fool; adieu for ever!

Lord and Lady Lorton are ſoon going to London, and poor I am to be left with Mrs. Murray ſeeking adventures, leſt my luckleſs form ſhould deprive my couſin of his heart. He is to leave Paris in three months I find, and captivate

vate the Engliſh ladies with his accompliſhments, which my uncle has heard are now abſolutely irreſiſtible. Before I ſaw this Fool, I wiſhed to ſee my couſin, but now——Pſhaw! I have no patience with myſelf to fancy a ſtranger ſo—a will-o'th'-wiſp—a phantom never more to be found. Poſitively, I muſt lay aſide my pen, Silena, till I have overcome this folly, for I ſhall tire you as well as myſelf. My dear girl, think of all the chearful things you can; never indulge ſadneſs; and continue to love

Your very ſincere friend,

HARRIOT MEYNEL.

Miſs HOWARD *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Elyſium-Place.

LET me hope, my amiable Harriot, you will yourſelf make uſe of the advice your laſt letter to me concludes with. It is very neceſſary for one in your apparent ſituation. From the natural livelineſs of your diſpoſition, together with the variety of company you fall into, and the good ſenſe you are miſtreſs of, I flatter myſelf that you will be able ſoon to eraſe from your tender thoughts the idea of a ſtranger whom you may never more meet with, or who, if you ſhould ſee him again, is perhaps unworthy of your attention. Be guided by theſe prudential dictates, my dear friend, and let me have the pleaſing ſatisfaction of a ſincere aſſurance from you, that

Mr.

Mr. *Fool* never ariſes in your memory but in common with the other circumſtances attending your adventure at the maſquerade.

Miſs Shenkin interrupted me. She is quite in raptures with Lord Villars, who is juſt arrived. "I muſt infallibly loſe my heart," ſhe ſays, "he is ſo angelic." I ſhook my head, aſſuring her it was very ſafe, ſpite of all his charms. "Impoſſible," returned ſhe—"but you have not yet ſeen him. *Allons*, Silena; come, come, make haſte—Mrs. Villars deſires you will repair to the Temple of Flora, to make tea, as my Lord ſeems to admire it, and the day is ſo warm. But, adieu! I'll not waſte time with you; *depechez vous*." So ſaying, away ſhe flew.

I muſt follow, my deareſt Harriot; for I am not miſtreſs of my time.

❁ ❁

When I deſcended to the parlour, Davy informed me that his miſtreſs and company were gone to the garden, had ſent my lute there, and deſired I would bring the muſic of Acis and Galatea. I obeyed; Mr. Villars and my Lord meeting me before I arrived at the temple. Lord Villars treated me with as much tenderneſs and reſpect as if he had been acquainted with my misfortunes and birth. Methought, nevertheleſs, there was a mixture of confuſion in his manner; but poſſibly this imagination proceeded only from my fears of being known.

His Lordſhip is really bleſt with the fineſt form I ever beheld, even much ſuperior

ſuperior to the cruel author of my miſery, though I once thought that was impoſſible; for, whatever the inhuman Melville's faults are, his perſon is certainly admirable: but on Lord Villars' countenance is impreſſed a benignity and goodneſs which ſeem the reſult of innate virtue. When he ſpeaks, a ſoothing perſuaſion dwells on his accents which in a manner forces attention. Lady Villars muſt certainly have been loſt to virtue before ſhe became his wife, or ſhe could never have ſlighted a man altogether ſo formed to pleaſe. Poor woman! her repentance now cannot regain him—ſhe is free to range—is loſt. But you deſired me not to be grave, therefore I muſt deſiſt from further reflection.

After tea, Miſs Shenkin played ſeveral tunes, and exerted herſelf in ſing-

ing; it was then my turn; after which his Lordſhip favoured us with ſeveral favourite airs, and performed to admiration: the inſtrument ſeemed poſſeſſed of ſounds ſuperior to what was ever heard from it before. Exceſs of pleaſure made us mute for ſome minutes after he had done. Mrs. Villars was the firſt who broke ſilence: "I vow, my Lord," ſaid ſhe laughing, "you ſing delightfully—Lord! how could Lady Villars ever be tired of hearing you? I declare, nephew, I think you make as good an *Orphus* as any god that Mr. Villars reads of. Ha! ha! ha! Don't you think ſo, Miſs Shenkin?"

"I proteſt, Mrs. Villars, you have made a very judicious remark; my Lord certainly plays and ſings to admiration."

His

His Lordſhip bowed to their compliments. Mr. Villars and your friend returned him thanks for the delight he had afforded us. After walking for an hour or two, we returned to the houſe. Miſs Shenkin with great reluctance took her leave, but has promiſed to be with us again to-morrow. The night is far advanced, my dear Harriot; therefore I muſt conclude with wiſhing you health and a reſtoration of your former ſerenity of mind.

SILENA HOWARD.

Lord VILLARS *to Lord* DUNCAN *at* Paris.

Elyſium-Place.

WHERE art thou, Duncan? Three letters, and no return! They were carried to the different poſt-houſes by va-

rious hands indeed; but they certainly were put in: yet I know not what to think of it. Thou haſt not received them I muſt ſuppoſe, or ſilence would ſcarce ſo long have prevailed; therefore I muſt give thee an abridgment of the contents: they recited to thee a confirmation of my having gained a bill of divorcement againſt Mary, my wife;—my journey to Lord N——'s, and enquiry after the charming Avelini;—a refuſal to my requeſt, with an avowal that he did not know where ſhe was gone. In hopes of gaining information, I acquainted him with the ſituation of my heart. He ſeemed ſurprized, and confuſed; but at laſt, to eaſe my pain, as he declared, informed me I could not gain her—She was engaged to another, therefore could never think of me. No, no, ſaid he, as if ſpeaking to himſelf with

regret,

regret, it can never be. His words made me unhappy; and, to endeavour to relieve my anxiety, I determined to come hither, where, by the force of reaſon, and the powerful arguments of my uncle, (whom I intended making my confident) I hoped to regain my liberty, and be reſtored to tranquility, as the fair cauſe of my unhappineſs was in honour bound to another. Hither I came, Duncan, and found with Mr. and Mrs. Villars a Welſh girl who endeavours to affect the *bon ton*, and is abſolutely ridiculous. My uncle was elevated at the ſight of me, and immediately conducted me to the garden, where numberleſs improvements have been made ſince my laſt viſit. Finding me pleaſed with a new pavilion, called the Temple of Flora, he ordered tea to be brought there, and, as I was fond of muſic, bid the ſervant tell Miſs

Howard ſhe muſt come there to make tea, and bring a muſic-book with her. This Miſs Howard, he informed me, was companion to his wife; an amiable, accompliſhed young woman, who had met with misfortunes which reduced her to that capacity. From his recommendation I expected to meet with an agreeable woman; when, obſerving her at a diſtance, he ſaid, we will walk to meet her if you are not tired, Harry.

You cannot expect me to expreſs what I felt, Duncan, when I diſcovered Miſs Howard and the charming Avelini to be the ſame perſon. It was with the greateſt difficulty imaginable I concealed my ſenſations. After making tea, which ſhe did with a grace peculiar to herſelf, and Miſs Shenkin had ſqualled us almoſt deaf, the lovely maid favoured us with a few

a few ſongs. At the ſound of her angelic voice it was with difficulty, Charles, I could forbear throwing myſelf at her feet, and declaring how much I adored her. I was obliged in turn to perform, though not to my own ſatisfaction; the company, however, honoured me with their commendations. Miſs Howard was polite and pleaſing, without a ſemblance of flattery. She has that eaſe and politeneſs of behaviour which ever diſtinguiſh ladies of the firſt faſhion. But, in ſpite of the height to which my paſſion is raiſed, I am determined to be on my guard, and find out her private hiſtory before I acquaint her with my ſentiments: for which reaſon I behave to her with reſpect only, and am certain ſhe has no idea of my ſofter feelings. We paſs our time agreeably: ſhe is a woman of refined ſenſe, but was an intire ſtranger to

my uncle before ſhe was recommended here. Now, I am very anxious to diſcover what her engagement is, and why Lord N—— diſowned knowing where ſhe was. I took an opportunity this morning of naming him before her: ſhe bluſhed exceedingly. I can't believe ſhe has any engagement; yet what could be her connection at Lord N——'s; he muſt know her affairs. Sometimes I am almoſt determined to inform her that I ſaw her there. I know not what to do, and dare not now adviſe with my uncle. This Welſh plague, Miſs Shenkin, attends our ſteps ſo, that I cannot find my charmer one moment alone. Then, Duncan, Lord Clandon is here too, with your old companion Clairville, who both ſeem convinced of her powerful attractions; ſo that I am obliged to conceal my paſſion with the greateſt care, and watch my every

every action with vigilance. She behaves to Clairville, I think, with attention and reſpect, but viſibly avoids Clandon as much as poſſible. A melancholy is ſtill impreſſed on her beautiful features—She frequently ſighs too—Ah! Duncan, there is ſome myſtery—I muſt ſeek it out; for I find I ſhall be miſerable without her; ſhe is ſo uncommon a woman—ſo void of affectation—and has ſuch ſolidity of judgment, for one ſo young!—But the more I think, the more I am bewildered.—Surely I cannot be deceived in her. Write to me, Charles; inform me if thou doſt ſtill exiſt, and be free with advice to thy friend

VILLARS.

Miſs HOWARD *to Miſs* MEYNEL.

Elyſium-Place.

I FEAR you do not deal ſincerely with me, my dear Harriot, when you declare the idea of the ſtranger is baniſhed from your heart. Spite of your endeavours againſt it, a languidneſs I never before obſerved appears throughout your letter, and convinces me all is not right. Ah! my friend, to deceive me is nothing, but deceive not yourſelf: reflect on the dangerous conſequence of foſtering the thoughts of an entire ſtranger in your breaſt; think how it may—nay, muſt, if you perſiſt in it—imbitter your whole life. The more indulgence you give to reflection on this phantom, the more agreeable he will be to your imagination. His firſt appearance was engaging in a

ſcene

ſcene of gaiety—He continues charming, becauſe you had not an opportunity by ſubſequent interviews to perceive his faults, and how very unworthy of your affection in reality he may be. I hope my amiable Harriot will liſten to her Silena; the ſincereſt friendſhip ever felt dictates my pen. Avoid ſolitude, the nurſe of love, and ſtrive by various amuſements and objects to overcome a ſentiment which, if cheriſhed, muſt render you unhappy. I drop the ſubject, my dear friend, with wiſhing that the diſquiet which I am afraid at preſent invades your boſom, may ſoon give place to your accuſtomed eaſe and ſprightlineſs.

Lord Villars, by a further acquaintance, proves ſtill more worthy one's good opinion. His merit riſes ſuperior to any man's

man's I ever met with. It is well my deſtiny was fixed before I ſaw him, or perhaps I might fooliſhly have beſtowed my heart where there would have been no probability of a return. His taſte is very refined, and I don't think he ſeems likely to fix his regard with precipitation. I fancy he will be difficult in his choice; few women will ſuit him. His father compelled him to marry Lady Mary T——, therefore his own choice has not yet been diſcovered. I frequently wiſh his Lordſhip and you were known to each other, and that your mutual happineſs might be the conſequence.—But perhaps it would not prove ſo; we mortals ſeldom form right judgment as to the happineſs or miſery of futurity. I often reflect on the great pleaſure my marriage afforded my dear father in his laſt moments; yet how contrary

to

to his kind expectations did it prove!—But let me wave that dreadful ſubject.

Poor Miſs Shenkin ſpeaks to me in confidence frequently of Lord Villars. According to her method of delivering her ſentiments, "he is charming paſt deſcription"—"his power is irreſiſtible"—and there is "no withſtanding his alluring manner." But, as ſhe has no hopes of a conqueſt over him, ſhe yields to Lord Clandon's flattery, and would not be averſe to receive his hand. I have avoided this Lord's company as much as poſſible.

Laſt night Mr. Clairville, finding me alone in the drawing-room, embraced the opportunity to declare his affection for me in a manner I could not be offended at, as he thought me at liberty

to

to receive addreſſes from his ſex. I returned him thanks for his obliging opinion of me, but intreated him at the ſame time to deſiſt from thinking of what could never come to paſs: that I was ſatisfied with my preſent ſituation, and if Mr. Villars and his Lady would permit me to remain with them all my life, I ſhould eſteem myſelf happy to continue unmarried:—and if I ſhould be ſo unfortunate as to diſpleaſe them, I doubted not, from the mercy of Providence, that ſome other friends would ariſe. In ſhort, I told him that I had been witneſs to ſo many unhappy marriages, that I had taken a final reſolution not to enter into that ſtate. He pleaded hard, but I remained inexorable, and inſiſted upon his never mentioning the ſubject to me again. He grew melancholy, and, ſeeing Lord Clandon approach, retired.

His

His Lordſhip, finding me in a reverie, began at firſt to rally me concerning his friend. When I ſeriouſly aſſured him he was miſtaken, he in a rapture fell at my feet, and imprinted ſeveral kiſſes on my hand before I could withdraw it—ſwore he adored me—and ſince I had refuſed Clairville, it gave him hopes I would liſten to him; "for, ſurely, my angelic Silena, ſaid he, you don't imagine that charming form, ſo moulded for adoration, was created only to be viewed," "and in virgin gloom your future days be ſpent."

"You are become inſolent, my Lord," ſaid I, with warmth, endeavouring to ſnatch my hand from him. "My benefactors will not permit me to be inſulted, though only their dependant.—Unhand me—I will be releaſed."

As

As theſe words were pronouncing, Lord Villars and Mr. Clairville entered. The latter caſt an angry look at Lord Clandon; the former ſeemed ſurprized.

My inſolent ſuitor let go my hand, and aroſe.

Alarmed leſt Lord Villars ſhould imbibe an unworthy opinion of me, and impart it to his uncle, I could not conceal my ſenſations—I burſt into tears.

"Good God! Miſs Howard," ſaid his Lordſhip, "what is the matter?—I hope our entrance did not diſturb you."

"No, my Lord; it was a pleaſing interruption to me. Lord Clandon, vain of his rank, thinks he may inſult me with impunity becauſe I am ſo unfortu-

nate

nate as to be dependant in life: but, alas!——yet let me intreat your pardon, my Lord; ſuch an inſignificant creature as I am is not worthy your attention—I will weep alone."—I withdrew.

Lord Villars' accuſtomary humanity was viſible; he ſeemed willing to detain me, but fearful of offending.

It was only to the next room I retired, where I could hear every word that paſſed. Lord Villars rebuked his fellow-peer for his behaviour, diſplayed how unworthy his rank it was to inſult any young lady, however ſituated in life, eſpecially when innocence and virtue were her only portion—It was moreover an affront to Mr. and Mrs. Villars, whoſe protection I was under—That he hoped never to meet with the like complaint again,

As theſe words were pronouncing, Lord Villars and Mr. Clairville entered. The latter caſt an angry look at Lord Clandon; the former ſeemed ſurprized.

My inſolent ſuitor let go my hand, and aroſe.

Alarmed leſt Lord Villars ſhould imbibe an unworthy opinion of me, and impart it to his uncle, I could not conceal my ſenſations—I burſt into tears.

"Good God! Miſs Howard," ſaid his Lordſhip, "what is the matter?—I hope our entrance did not diſturb you."

"No, my Lord; it was a pleaſing interruption to me. Lord Clandon, vain of his rank, thinks he may inſult me with impunity becauſe I am ſo unfortunate

nate as to be dependant in life: but, alas!——yet let me intreat your pardon, my Lord; ſuch an inſignificant creature as I am is not worthy your attention—I will weep alone."—I withdrew.

Lord Villars' accuſtomary humanity was viſible; he ſeemed willing to detain me, but fearful of offending.

It was only to the next room I retired, where I could hear every word that paſſed. Lord Villars rebuked his fellow-peer for his behaviour, diſplayed how unworthy his rank it was to inſult any young lady, however ſituated in life, eſpecially when innocence and virtue were her only portion—It was moreover an affront to Mr. and Mrs. Villars, whoſe protection I was under—That he hoped never to meet with the like complaint again,

again, or his uncle muſt be informed of it, who he was certain would never entertain any man who was impertinent to Miſs Howard, a young lady he eſteemed much, and who claimed the reſpect due to her ſex from every one.

" 'Pon my ſoul, Villars, I do reſpect her; have I not been paying my adorations?" ſaid Lord Clandon, endeavouring to paſs it off by raillery.

Clairville alſo very warmly attacked him; but at laſt a peace was concluded, and his Lordſhip promiſed never more to offend.

My ſpirits were overpowered; I ſat weeping near an hour. Reflection convinced me my conduct was blameable: I had acted in a childiſh unthinking manner.

manner. Why did I not ſilently retire, inſtead of urging complaints? My folly might have drawn Lord Villars and Mr. Clairville, who are two worthy men, into diſagreeable and alarming conſequences. Oh! Harriot, I was diſpleaſed with myſelf and the whole world almoſt. Thus it is when vexations oppreſs us. But a ſummons to dinner rouzed me from my reverie, and I endeavoured to recover myſelf, that I might not appear ridiculous.

Mr. Villars, who is as kindly attentive to me as a parent, obſerved the alteration of my countenance, and redneſs of my eyes. He drew me aſide, the company not being ſeated, and aſked the occaſion of it. In return to his kind enquiries, I alleged a ſevere head-ach. He ſeemed to doubt—looked at his nephew—

phew—but ſaid no more. Luckily Miſs Shenkin happened not to be preſent, and I eſcaped her inquiſitiveneſs. Lord Clandon appeared rather confuſed. Mr. Clairville looked grave, ſighed much, and was very aſſiduous in helping me to any thing I wanted at table. Lord Villars often beheld me with looks that denoted pity, and behaved with his uſual politeneſs to every one but Lord Clandon, whom he ſeemed ſtill diſpleaſed with.

The day being warm, Mrs. Villars choſe to repoſe after dinner; and there being no ladies, I took a book, and retired to the Temple of Flora.

It was in vain I attempted to read; the morning's adventure was too deeply impreſſed on my memory. I ſeemed to have

have behaved like a thoughtleſs giddy girl. Why ſhould Lord Clandon's inſolence at that period particularly affect my ſpirits? Yet it now occurred to my reflection, that, if I had not informed Lord Villars, but ſilently retired, he might have imagined I favoured the addreſſes of my libertine lover; therefore my conduct was not ſo blameable as I had before deemed it. But what meaſures ſhould I take to prevent further importunities from Lord Clandon and Mr. Clairville. The latter claimed my pity, as his intentions were honourable. This led me to ruminate on my unhappy fate, in being obliged to conceal my marriage, and to ſuffer a worthy man to continue in the error of believing me at liberty to be addreſſed. My misfortunes all recurred to my imagination, and I ſat ſtupefied with woe.

Lord

Lord Villars paſſed, and, ſeeing me in the Temple, entered. It was ſome moments before I could recollect myſelf and ariſe.

"I fear, Miſs Howard, ſaid his Lordſhip, I am an intruder, and rouze you from a reverie, which, perhaps, you would chuſe to remain in; a retroſpect of what has been agreeable is pleaſing."

"It is ſo, my Lord," returned I, with a ſigh; "but a very ſmall ſhare of that has been my lot."

"I am very ſorry, Miſs Howard, ſaid his Lordſhip, one ſo young ſhould have reaſon to ſay ſo."

"I find no reaſon to complain now, my Lord," ſaid I, with a faint ſmile.

"Under

"Under the protection of Mr. and Mrs. Villars one cannot be unhappy."

"And yet under their protection I find Lord Clandon dared inſult you, Madam; but let me beg, that, if he ſhould offer further impertinence, you will acquaint my uncle or myſelf, and he ſhall be expelled this houſe for ever.——But I forget my errand, Miſs Howard," added he, heſitating and changing colour.—"It is a diſagreeable taſk to meddle in love-affairs, *(ſmiling,)* but poor Clairville has informed me of his ill ſucceſs this morning—He is very unhappy, and intreated me to plead in his behalf. Having urged me ſo much, I could not forbear taking compaſſion on him. He is a worthy man, has a handſome fortune, and I think would make a tender affectionate huſband. Pardon my interfering, ami-

able Miſs Howard, but I ſincerely pity him; and, if you have no engagement, what can be your objection?"

"The motives which guide your Lordſhip's actions are, I doubt not, always laudable," returned I; "they prompt to the welfare of your friends and mankind in general. As ſo near a relation to Mr. Villars, you are certainly intitled to interfere, therefore apologies are unneceſſary, my Lord. I am well convinced Mr. Clairville has great merit, and does me honour by his offer——But, ſaid I, heſitating, I have taken a final determination never to marry—no offers or allurements can make me break it.—It is not a fickle fancy, but a fixed reſolution, which no inducement can make me depart from. I ſincerely wiſh and hope that Mr. Clairville may ſoon meet with one

one more worthy his attention, and be compleatly happy, for I think him highly deſerving."

"You ſurprize me exceedingly, ſaid his Lordſhip, by ſpeaking ſo favourably of my friend, and yet refuſing him: ſurely he may hope that time will work wonders, Miſs Howard," added he, with a ſmile.

"Never, my Lord," ſaid I, with firmneſs. "I never vary my opinion in religion or love, (*ſmiling at the word* LOVE)—My fate is fixed." The laſt words eſcaped me unintentionally.

His Lordſhip, looking at me attentively, and rather moved, ſaid, with a ſigh, "Poor Clairville then has applied too late, I find.—Oh! Miſs Howard!"—

The ſound of voices pretty near made him ſtop. He haſtily quitted the temple, and immediately met 'ſquires Davies and Jones, who were coming in ſearch of him. They ſeemed willing to come forwards to the place I was in, but he drew them off another way, I ſuppoſe to prevent their ſeeing me, that I might eſcape their indelicate raillery.

Mrs. Villars found herſelf not well, wherefore I kept her company in her chamber the remainder of the day. But, my dear Harriot, it is high time to cloſe my letter, which is quite a pacquet: beſides, the poſt is going off; ſo that I muſt bid my beloved friend adieu!

SILENA HOWARD.

Lord

Lord VILLARS *to Lord* DUNCAN *at* Paris.

Elyſium-Place.

NEVER tell me, Duncan, of fixing my happineſs at once, as I have it in my power to make a ſpeedy declaration. Thou art a fine fellow to give advice, who art unacquainted with the paſſion which has gained ſuch dominion over my ſoul. Can I command reciprocal affection? Ah! Charles, Charles, I fear thy friend is doomed to ſpend the remainder of his days in miſery—They muſt be ſpent in wretchedneſs without Silena Howard. Her mental qualifications charm me more and more: but I have continued upon my guard tolerably well; I don't think ſhe yet ſuſpects how much I adore her; and, to prevent ſuſpicion, I undertook the ſevere taſk of

pleading for my rival Clairville. I confeſs, Duncan, I knew before-hand ſhe was reſolved to refuſe him, and I wanted to know her reaſon. She alleged that her final reſolution was never to marry, which determination nothing could remove—(then I began to tremble for myſelf); and afterwards, with a ſigh, Charles, ſhe ſaid, her fate was fixed. I was ready to ſhrink with horror—Lord N——'s converſation recurred to my memory; her words coincided with what he ſaid. I ſighed, and uttered ſomething as if in pity to my rival, when my own heart was rent. It was then, Duncan, I determined no longer to conceal my ſentiments, but declare how greatly I eſteemed her. I began, according to the ſituation of my mind, in the pathetic, with "Oh! Miſs Howard," when at that critical juncture two ſtupid fellows interrupted

rupted me. I ran out of the Temple of Flora, where I was with my charmer, that ſhe might eſcape their inhuman raillery, for Welſhmen in general have very little idea of delicacy; which is not much to be wondered at, as they cloud the ſhare of underſtanding allotted them by Providence with inebriety, which levels them almoſt with brutes. I am ſurprized that Mr. Brydone, who mentions hoſpitality and inebriety to be the characteriſtics of the Swiſs, the Scotch, and the Iriſh, ſhould exclude, or rather forget, the Welſh, who have always been ſo famed for both.

❁ ❁

By Heaven, the charmer of my ſoul is gone out to walk—alone too. I will purſue her, Duncan—inform her, as if

accidentally, that I ſaw her at Lord N——'s; from whence, perhaps, I may gain an inſight into her hiſtory.

❁ ❁

I ſoon overtook the lovely Silena, and, walking on with her, we diſcuſſed ſeveral ſubjects. I longed to come to the point, Charles, but could not ſettle in what manner I ſhould do it. At laſt I turned the converſation on the different counties in England, and aſked how ſhe liked Yorkſhire. She anſwered, Very well, and bluſhed. Not ſeeming to obſerve her change of countenance, I continued my diſcourſe, ſaying, when I firſt was introduced to her here, I thought ſhe was not an intire ſtranger to me; and it had ſince occurred to me that I ſaw her at Laurel-Grove the day before ſhe quitted it.

" Before

"Before I quitted it," repeated ſhe, turning pale as death. "Did Lady N—— inform you I was there, my Lord?"

To tell the truth, Duncan, I was almoſt in as great palpitation as her dear ſelf, but was determined, if poſſible, to compleat the taſk I had begun, and therefore anſwered, "She told me of your departure, Madam."

"You then know, Sir, who I am," ſaid ſhe, weeping; "and, knowing me, how could you attempt interceding for Mr. Clairville?"

Though I deteſted my own artifice, Charles, I could not at that period prevent myſelf from purſuing it, however unlaudable. In love, you know, allowances

ances are made for theſe things. But let me proceed with my account, Duncan. Her laſt ſpeech ſeemed derived from a nobleneſs of ſoul, though it was to me in a manner unintelligible. I ſuppoſed it alluded to what Lord N—— had informed me of—an irrevocable engagement ſhe had. "Pardon me, Madam, if I erred," was my anſwer.

She wept exceedingly. I attempted in vain for ſome time to aſſuage her grief. In ſhort, Charles, I was almoſt as much affected as herſelf—Her tears pierced my very ſoul. She obſerved it.

"Your humanity does you honour, my Lord. Mine are very uncommon misfortunes," continued ſhe; then throwing herſelf at my feet, "but O, my Lord, let me intreat you, by that unbounded

bounded compaſſion which you extend to all objects around you, that you will preſerve an inviolable ſecrecy both as to my misfortunes and name"——

I would not permit her to proceed without riſing off the ground—The lovely mourner rent my heart.—" For Heaven's ſake, amiable Miſs Avelini, ſaid I, ariſe."

She ſtarted—pauſed—then, ſighing, uttered, " Cruel Lady N——!"—— " What did ſhe ſay of me, my Lord?" purſued ſhe.

" It was Lord N——, Madam, informed me you was gone to London."

" Did he ſay for what purpoſe, my Lord?—Did *he* tell you my name and place of birth?"

" I learned,

"I learned, Madam, that your name was Avelini, and Italy your country."

"Pardon the impertinence of my enquiry, my Lord; was that the extent of your knowledge?" ſaid ſhe, bluſhing.

I found her ſo very unhappy, Charles, that my diſſimulation began to ſubſide—"I was acquainted with nothing further, Madam," anſwered I.

"You are acquainted with too much, my Lord," ſaid ſhe; "but let me repeat my intreaties that you will conceal having ſeen me at Lord N——'s from your uncle and every one elſe—Will your Lordſhip promiſe me to be ſilent?"

"Receive my moſt ſolemn aſſurances of ſecrecy as to that point, my worthy Miſs Howard, (ſince that is the name you

you chuſe now to retain); and, if you will favour me with a recital of thoſe misfortunes you mention, be aſſured the ſecret ſhall remain confined to my own boſom. If they are of a nature to be remedied, I ſolemnly declare all the power I am maſter of ſhall be exerted to do it."

"Ah! my Lord," returned ſhe, "I am very well convinced both of yours and Mr. Villars' humanity and benevolence.—If my woes could be redreſſed, I ſhould long ſince have applied to your kind uncle for relief—But they are irremediable, and Time only can be my friend, by enabling me to forget them."

"Since I have taken the liberty," ſaid I, "to enter ſo far into your concerns, my amiable friend, reſolve me one thing ſeriouſly;

ſeriouſly; What is your real motive for refuſing Mr. Clairville?"

She bluſhed, and was ſome time ſilent.

"My friendſhip for you, Madam," reſumed I, "makes me anxious for your happineſs: be aſſured that queſtion aroſe not from impertinent curioſity."

"I muſt beg your ſecrecy again, my Lord," anſwered ſhe, "and intreat you will diſſuade that gentleman from purſuing his addreſſes to me. My word is given to another," added ſhe, with a ſigh.

"I underſtand you, Madam," ſaid I, almoſt overpowered by her laſt words; "it is from the inability of being at preſent united with the object of your choice that you are ſo unhappy.——

If

If my intereſt, or fortune, can be of any ſervice to your lover, command it, Miſs Howard; he muſt be worthy my attention, as he is ſo cloſely connected with you."

"It is not fortune he wants," ſaid ſhe, in tears—"You muſt excuſe my explaining myſelf farther, my Lord. I return you my moſt grateful thanks for your friendly offers—I have nothing more to beſtow but prayers for your happineſs." So ſaying, ſhe begged I would permit her to return to the houſe alone. The leaſt deſire from thoſe we love is a command. I need not tell thee, Duncan, I complied.

Various are my reflections on the paſt ſcene; but they all end in dooming me to miſery. I cannot help concluding her confeſſion to be true, as to her engagement;

ment; but then I am not pleaſed at her ſpeaking ſo favourably of Clairville. She ſeems, indeed, to entertain a higher opinion of me than I deſerve, and owns a friendſhip for me ſo void of affectation, that it charms me. But to what purpoſe is her friendſhip only? Yet her friendſhip is dearer to me than the love of any other woman. How hard is my fate, Charles!

To love, and love in vain, oh! dreadful ſtate,
Her ſmiles ſtill adding to the pain I feel;
Perhaps 'twere better to endure her hate,
I then might urge her heart more hard than ſteel
Unworthy mine—Her pride, diſdain,
Would ſet me free, would end my pain:
But friendly kindneſs aggravates the ſmart,
And, like a cruel foe, ſtill deeper wounds the heart.

May you have a ſafe voyage to your native country, Charles, and be happier in love than your friend

VILLARS.

END *of the* FIRST VOLUME.